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ABSTRACT

This volume of select papers from The Sixteenth Perspectives in Reading Conference addresses itself to the theme of the conference, "Reading, Children's Books, and Our Pluralistic Society." The speakers themselves represented a wide range of professional functioning. The papers discuss how children's literature dealing with minority groups can provide memorable characters with whom minority children can identify, enable children to gain insights into the lives and culture of persons superficially different from themselves, and dispel stereotypes about minority groups. The papers also provide rationales and suggestions for presenting minority literature, samples of such literature, and discussions relating to the field of minority children's literature. (WR)

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Perspectives in Reading No. 16

READING, CHILDREN'S BOOKS, AND OUR PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

Compiled and Edited by

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and

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Prepared by a Joint Committee of the
International Reading Association and Children's Book Council

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Foreword

The Perspectives in Reading Conference has served as the kickoff for many of IRA's annual conventions and these two-day meetings have, to a large degree, set the tone and quality of the convention proper. The Sixteenth Perspectives in Reading Conference, sponsored jointly by IRA and the Childrens Book Council, was no exception; its theme was not only eye-catching but timely; the quality of the papers presented was superb; the audience reaction was complimentary; the questions posed by those in attendance were probing in nature and revealed teachers' concern for the various segments of our pluralistic society.

The theme of the conference, *Reading, Children's Books, and Our Pluralistic Society*, fits most admirably into the context of the overriding purpose of IRA, "To promote the development among all peoples of a level of reading proficiency that is commensurate with each individual's unique capacity."

Benefits accrued from attending this meeting were many. Yet those who did not attend can get the flavor of the meeting by reading the papers selected for publication by Jean Karl and Harold Tanyzer. There is an excellent balance of papers, ranging from such titles as "We Are Still Afraid" to "Thoughts on Children's Books, Reading, and Tomorrow." Implicit is a strong overtone suggesting a well-balanced literature program in the schools.

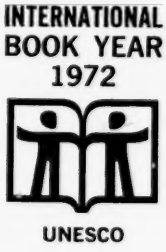
Many other benefits will be realized by the reading of these papers. It will be readily evident that literature is the medium through which the following may be more thoroughly comprehended:

1. Literature can be used to acquire new and unique insights into the heritage of minority groups, their contributions to their own culture, and to other segments of our society.

2. Literature can aid in the development of imagery and imagination, but it can also aid in the development of an appreciation for beauty.
3. Literature can help in appreciating the *lilt of the line, the rhythm of the language,* of various ethnic groups; it provides a road to the wonderland of words and ways of using them.
4. Literature will help one become a more benevolent human being, having compassion and respect for all members of the human race.
5. Literature has great potential value as a therapeutic agent providing unlimited opportunities for harmonizing emotions, enabling the reader to possess himself with a full measure of quietness.
6. Literature is a time machine; through and by it the child can converse with great personalities, living or dead – poets, humanists, dreamers, builders, philosophers. Turning the clock back, the child for a short span of time can live in an age of his own choosing.
7. Literature can become a mode of transformation. A child can become Lou Gehrig, Jackie Robinson, Charles Lindberg, Madame Marie Curie, Louis Pasteur, Booker T. Washington, or any other international hero.
8. Literature has great potential for developing wholesome attitudes toward one's self.
9. Literature can be used as a means for developing wholesome attitudes toward skills and abilities; it provides ample proof that no dichotomy exists between the cognitive and affective domain of the process of reading.

The papers presented in this volume clearly demonstrate that each child must be provided ample opportunities to enjoy the fruits of having learned to read. Your thoughtful reading of this volume is invited. Not only will you find each discussion to be informative, you will also enjoy the artistry of each author.

Donald L. Cleland, *President*
International Reading Association
1970-1971



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An Overview

Harold Tanyzer

The concern of the Sixteenth Perspectives Conference was with the positions and possible contributions of children's books vis-à-vis a major question of our time: "Can our American democracy assume its fullest viability through its inclusion of minority citizens?" Some of our speakers dealt with the need for making "invisible men" emerge in all their beauty and complexity for minority and majority readers. Others addressed themselves to the issue of whether the "outsider" can write meaningfully of a particular ethnic/racial experience. The final presentations explored opportunities for individual and societal growth inherent in the new savoring of the riches of ethnic and racial diversity.

The speakers themselves represented a wide range of professional functioning. Some were members of minority groups; some were not. It should be noted that the scope of the presentation was limited to only a portion of the minority spectrum in the United States. In order to keep within the confines of the allotted time and still avoid superficiality, the focus was on the two minority experiences that are occupying the foreground of America's consciousness: that is, the black and the Spanish-American. Indeed, in order to be true to that part of the title which referred to "Pluralistic Society," it would have been necessary to treat in depth the experiences of other minorities which have been crucially and inextricably entwined with American history. Thus, among others, the Indian, the Oriental, and the Jew have not received specific and deserved attention. It is to be hoped that this small attempt at "consciousness-raising" about certain minority groups, children, and literature, which was the essence of this Conference, will lead to a more generalized understanding and appreciation of the place of all minority experiences in education.

At this point I would like to make some observations about the history of the attempt to make children's literature reflect a pluralistic society, and about the historical context in which this movement has grown. Finally, I shall touch upon the matter of what we may realistically expect in the way of results from this type of literature.

Although many people in education are *now* aware of the need for a children's literature that reflects pluralistic life, there always were a pioneering *few* who understood this need before it gained this current wide acceptance. In a 1969 speech before the Children's Book Council, Augusta Baker described the attempts she and her colleagues made 30 years ago to compile a collection of juvenile books reflecting black life. Careful study brings to light years of effort by both minority and nonminority authors to reflect multi-ethnic life for their youthful readers.

I think, however, that there can be few objections to the statement that multi-ethnic life was not found in the mainstream of children's literature to a sufficient extent until publishers and writers responded to a national demand for an end to the overwhelmingly lily-white, WASP, middle-class emphasis in trade books and most particularly in textbooks and in basal readers.

These changes, such as they were, did not take place through calm academic interchange but, rather, were forged in the fire of national confrontation and violence. Let's try to trace a few of the historical strands that have led to the current situation.

Although World War II was fought by America in the name of democracy and self-determination of peoples, it was not until 1954 that the Supreme Court struck down the constitutionality of segregated school arrangements. Progress in integration was painfully slow, but the early sixties presented the image of a hopeful time in which one found blacks and whites sitting-in, freedom-riding, freedom-marching, and joining hands to sing "We Shall Overcome." Certain glaring and unbelievable discriminatory practices in the South were dealt a death blow.

People began to realize, however, that the main truths of interracial relations were to be found in the big cities which were largely in the North. By 1966 the census bureau was estimating that 69 percent of all blacks lived in metropolitan areas compared to 64 percent for whites. Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans were also packed into the ghettos of the largest cities. Concurrently, middle-class whites were fleeing the problematic cities and creating suburbs that were effectively zoned to keep out the poor. While most Americans enjoyed unparalleled prosperity, the ghetto-dwellers found that all the civil rights legislation and "wars on poverty" made little substantive difference in their lives.

Then the plight of the ghetto-dweller was impressed upon the world's consciousness by the urban riots of 1967. The Kerner Commission was charged by President Johnson with the task of finding out: "What happened? Why did it happen? What can be done to prevent it from happening again?" After intensive

study and exhaustive investigation, the commission arrived at this basic conclusion: "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white – separate and unequal."

What does children's literature have to offer to a nation thus divided? At its best it can hold a mirror up to minority life and provide memorable characters with whom minority children can identify. At its best it can enable children to gain insights into the lives and essential humanity of people who seem superficially quite different. Any culture in the world is enormously multifaceted. There is no one white life or black life or Latin American life or Indian life that is entirely representative of its people. Children's literature that "tells it like it is" about a culture must talk of patience and joy and triumph as well as of violence, pain, and despair. Children's literature, therefore, may make the distinct contribution of dispelling stereotypes about groups.

Can children's literature lead to changes in attitude on the part of the reader? What little research evidence there is on this issue suggests that attitudes *may* be influenced by what children read but that we really don't know how extensive or permanent such influences are.

Toward the end of his brief life Malcolm X said that he believed older people would not get far in healing our societal wounds; but even this largely disenchanted man detected a new current running in America, and he said that he believed that the younger people would be the ones to make real progress. Surely all of us hope that today's children will grow up to do a better job in forging a more successful pluralistic society than we have. In a country where there are such massive problems of inequity, one can hardly claim that children's literature by and of itself can alter the course of history. However, since our hope is that the reading of books can equip a person to deal with life better by enlarging his understanding of himself and others, let us applaud and encourage the current trend in children's literature toward presenting youth with the realities of our pluralistic society. It may well be that books of this type are helping to give rise to a climate of thought and feeling that will make possible the development of the new and constructive changes we need so badly.

Ethnicity and Reading: Three Avoidable Dangers

David Elkind

In recent years, representatives of the field of children's books have striven to be in the forefront of the movement towards racial equality in America. Efforts to attain racial equality in children's literature have moved in two complementary directions. One of these directions is towards eliminating from existing literature materials which are degrading to a particular race or which suggest derogatory stereotypes. The other movement is towards introducing black children, urban settings, and black themes into the literature for young people.

While these movements are laudable in principle, they are not always so in practice. The fact is that we have so little concrete data as to what is "degrading" and what is "egalitarian" that decisions in those regards are often made on a personal and arbitrary basis. To some people, for example, *Little Black Sambo* is a degrading story; and at least one children's record of the story has a song entitled "Little Gray Sambo." To others, like myself, the story is not degrading because Sambo's failings and successes are those of all young children and are not part of a stereotype of his race. In such cases of honest disagreement, who is to decide what is egalitarian?

As a psychologist, I do not have an answer to this question, but I do know some of the typical dangers that occur whenever one group tries to help another which it feels it has abused and mistreated. The dangers are psychological and threaten the success of the intended "reforms." Accordingly, I want to stress some of the dangers that should be avoided in attempts to make children's literature "relevant" to black youngsters. These dangers include 1) the danger of intuitive psychology, 2) the danger of reverse prejudice, and 3) the danger of

easy conscience. Let us look at each of these dangers in a little more detail and particularly as they pertain to the new movement towards racial equality in the children's book field.

THE DANGER OF INTUITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology, like education, has the disadvantage that everyone believes he knows something about it without ever having studied the subject. While it is undoubtedly true that most people do know something about psychology, it is also true that they can make educational or psychological decisions on the basis of common sense and without reflection. From a more informed scientific point of view, however, these decisions can often be quite wrong and even harmful. Let me give you a few examples in the domain of the children's book field.

One of the most predominant trends in reading series for young people today is the introduction of black children and ghetto settings into the story material. The assumption is – and black parents are often vehement about this – that children will learn to read most easily by reading about what is familiar to them and that which touches upon their experiences. Black parents often object to fantasy material because it seems to lack educational content and will not move the child forward in his school work.

While it is easy to understand the intuitive psychology behind the wish to provide black children with stories about ghetto settings, it is also easy to show that this intuitive psychology is in error. First of all, research suggests that the major causes of reading retardation among black children include inadequate preparation in the preschool years and a written dialect which is at variance with their spoken dialect. There is, as far as I can tell, no evidence that the colors of the characters or that the setting of the stories (in suburb or ghetto) have anything to do with aiding or hindering reading achievement in black children.

Furthermore, despite the "rightness" inherent in the intuitive idea of providing ghetto stories for ghetto children, this approach might do more harm than it would do good. One of the complaints about the reading series for white children, "Run, Spot, Run," has been that the stories are too commonplace and familiar. What intrigues children is the unfamiliar, not the familiar. A case in point is the family television show (such as *The Courtship of Eddie's Father, The Partridge Family,* and *Family Affair*). A peculiarity of such programs is that *one or the other parent is missing.* It is the unfamiliar circumstance that makes these shows intriguing to children. From this point of view, ghetto stories are likely to be more interesting to children from the suburbs than they are to children in urban settings.

There is still another bit of intuitive psychology embedded in the desire to present ghetto children with ghetto stories – the distrust of fantasy. Ghetto parents in particular seem to feel that fantasy is detrimental to mental growth.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. Indeed, just the reverse is true, and fantasy is an important mechanism of mental growth. An essential aspect of mental growth is learning to distinguish between reality and appearance, between how things look and how they really are. As children engage in fantasy, they learn to distinguish between what is superficial appearance and what is underlying fact.

The child who, as a result of parental or societal pressure, is overly tied to reality is often bound by the appearances of things and by their immediateness. He cannot get to the levels of abstraction required for complex intellectual endeavors. In a way, engagement in fantasy activity keeps the mind open and prevents it from being structured and closed too early. Children who mature too early in their knowledge of the ways of the world may not develop as far intellectually as youngsters who have had a more prolonged childhood. Childhood fantasy is the starting point for creative thinking; scientific, mathematical, and philosophical thinking all have a fantasy component. Contrary to the assumptions of intuitive psychology, a reasonable amount of fantasy activity is essential to full realization of intellectual potential.

THE DANGER OF REVERSE PREJUDICE

Our new awareness of the plight of black Americans has made us supersensitive to the differences between white and black children in the kinds and amounts of intellectual stimulation and parental instruction and support which they receive. Awareness of these black-white differences has been accentuated by the wealth of new research studies on ghetto children, works which repeatedly emphasize the racial differences. Stories in the new readers for children also stress racial differences by generally depicting black children in ghetto settings.

It is clear, of course, that this emphasis on racial differences is well intentioned and is meant to make the larger society aware of the black experience as well as to give value to this experience in the eyes of young children. Unfortunately, however, just the reverse may be the outcome. What the social scientists have inadvertently done is to create a new stereotype of the Negro child who lives in a ghetto, who comes from a broken home, and who has had sordid experiences with adults. In many ways, we have substituted a new stereotype of the Negro which is hardly more complimentary than the old one.

The facts are, of course, quite otherwise. Not all blacks live in the ghetto, and among those that do there is tremendous variation. On the same block one can find a cleaning woman who is sending her children to college, an alcoholic whose children are in foster homes, and a lawyer and his family with the children doing very well in school. In short, there is every bit as much diversity in the black community as there is in the white community. The emphasis on black-white differences badly misrepresents the heterogeneity among black families and children.

Although such overgeneralization and stereotyping are probably inevitable at this stage in our attempts to redress the racial imbalance in America, something can be done about it. One of the things that could be done is to make the diversity of the black experience apparent in the reading material for children. The depiction of black children in nonghetto settings and in stories with nonghetto themes will certainly not undo the reverse prejudice that has derived from the new black stereotype. It could help, however, to present a more realistic picture of the black experience to both black and white children.

Before closing this section, I want to mention a more pernicious form of reverse prejudice, namely, *role reversal.* An example from children's fiction recently came to my attention. While in the pediatrician's office, I picked up a book, *The Five Little Bears*, which was about five black bears called Eenie, Meenie, Meinee, Moe, and Nig. The black bears fell into some white paint and were mistaken for polar bears by a polar bear mother. When they pleaded that they were not her cubs, she gave them a trial by ice water, which they failed. They were then returned to their mother, who washed off the white paint and scolded them for their escapade. Then, like all naughty children since Peter Rabbit, they were put to bed without any supper.

This story has messages at several different levels. By using the names Eenie, Meenie, Meinee, Moe, and Nig, the writer evokes a familiar and racially derogatory childhood rhyme which makes it clear where the "Nig" came from. Then the author makes the "white" mother the "bad" mother, and the cubs learn how painful it is to be white (polar bears) and how much nicer it is to be black. The writer's intent is not entirely clear because he seems to be saying that black is better than white but also that blacks ought to be satisfied with their lot and ought not to try to be whites. Although the writer probably meant this as a racially enlightened story, it can be read quite otherwise. In trying to reverse black and white roles, the writer unwittingly reveals his real belief that blacks should stay in "their place."

THE DANGER OF EASY CONSCIENCE

There is a third danger in trying to make children's literature free of stereotypes and relevant to black experience, and that is complacency. It is convenient to assume, once we have put black children in black settings in stories with black themes, that we have done our share towards equal rights for blacks – at least as far as books and reading are concerned. Complacency about these efforts is not justified. As I mentioned earlier, the real factors involved in the reading retardation of black children probably derive from lack of preparation and from the fact that black children speak a different dialect from the language in printed stories. There is, thus, a discrepancy between the spoken and written languages for black children that does not hold for white children. The poetry of Langston Hughes appeals to black children for just this reason,

namely, that it is in a familiar dialect. Until we begin to deal with these real issues in the reading retardation of some black children, complacency about our efforts in making children's literature relevant to blacks is probably premature.

There is another area in which we may be too complacent as well. We may be too satisfied with the ability of white authors to write for black children. From my own limited reading of the new literature for black children, my impression is that writers such as Ezra J. Keats (*Whistle for Willie, Hi Cat*) are the exception rather than the rule. In addition to changing the content of children's literature to eliminate stereotypes and to make it relevant to black children, we also need to bring blacks into all phases of the writing and publishing field. If we do that, the danger of complacency will be countered by the presence of individuals who will not permit token modifications to pass for real changes.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

I have tried to describe some of the dangers which arise whenever one group tries to help another that it formerly oppressed. These dangers – threats to successful execution of social reform – occur in every domain, including the children's book field. The dangers reside in our tendency to rely on intuitive psychology, our proclivity for reverse prejudice, and our eagerness for an easy conscience. While these are all very basic and very human tendencies, they can effectively sabotage well-intentioned efforts at remedying the racial injustices of the past.

In the end, the children's book field, like so many other institutions in American society, is embarked on a grand and humanitarian mission: the righting of wrongs done to blacks in our society. Success depends, however, not only upon what we do for blacks but also upon what we do about ourselves. If we can overcome our tendency to make decisions on the basis of intuitive psychology, if we inhibit our readiness to reverse prejudice, and if we do not succumb to the desire for a quick, easy conscience, we might still win the battle for racial equality in general – and in the children's book field in particular.

The Black Child's Needs

Gwendolyn Goldsby Grant

The late Whitney M. Young, Jr., in his 1965 syndicated column *To Be Equal* said, "Many Negro children have already been stunted emotionally and academically by the scars of slum schools and a life of slum shock. They have been preparing themselves for second class citizenship because they feel that is what society expects of them" (*6*).

Psychologist Robert Rosenthal refers to this process as "the self-fulfilling prophecy concept." Sixty-five years ago a pioneer sociologist by the name of Charles Horton Cooley introduced this idea of the negative expectation of a person's behavior. This negative expectation, communicated to the child sometimes in unintended ways, influences his actual behavior. Cooley refers to this process as the "looking glass concept."

Consciously or unconsciously, we sometimes program black children into the role of failure through this negative expectation concerning their abilities. This lowered expectancy level, which the educator may communicate to the child in a nonverbal manner, is extremely effective.

Black children learn, as all children do, from two separate curricula. Fantini and Weinstein (*5*) refer to these two curricula as the *formal curriculum* and the *hidden curriculum.* These gentlemen point out that, "Clearly, the education and socialization of any given child is far from limited to the four walls of the classroom but, rather, occurs in vast measure from a multifarious array of extraschool factors to which the child is exposed from the moment of his birth" (*5*).

The humorous story of a black child, Alfred, in an innercity classroom is a good example of one child's approach to the two curricula:

> One day the teacher asked, "Where is your pencil, Alfred?"
> "I ain't got one," Alfred replied.
> "How many times have I told you not to say that? Now listen Alfred," the teacher said. "I haven't got a pencil; you haven't got a pencil; we haven't got a pencil; they haven't got a pencil."
> "WELL THEN," Alfred wanted to know, "WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THE PENCILS?"

Alfred simply does not understand the language of the formal curriculum, and he will undoubtedly be tagged "verbally restricted," "anti-intellectual," and with other labels of failure. As Reisman points out, we have focused on what is "weak" or "wrong" in the case of "so called" disadvantaged children and have not paid enough attention to their strengths. Alfred's reasoning, in terms of the hidden cirriculum, after all, could not be faulted.

Bernstein points out that modes of speech and linguistic codes will vary substantially from culture to culture and among subcultures. Bernstein identifies the two general modes of speech that exist within any given language as elaborated and restricted (*5*). But I submit that Alfred's mode of speech is restricted only when he must function within the formal curriculum setting of the dominant culture in the neighborhood school. Alfred's language was perfectly adequate in the hidden curriculum of his neighborhood. Obviously then, if the formal curriculum is to achieve its purpose, it must be consistent with, or at least accommodating to, the learning imparted by the hidden curriculum.

An elaborated linguistic code was not used in Alfred's cultural environment. Alfred may be considered by some educators to be a restricted language code child, but Alfred is himself; he is literally forced to be the only self he knows. To evaluate him as a failure on the basis of the rules set forth by the dominant culture is to *deny Alfred's ideas of reality and social existence.*

Educators have traditionally considered black children with limited verbal ability as having a low capacity for scholastic achievement. School instruction itself has been based on a certain measure of verbal ability. Results from intelligence and aptitude testing have largely reinforced the notion that black children with limited verbal ability are inherently less capable of intellectual learning. Yet when one considers that a child's very mode of perception is shaped by the speech style to which he is exposed, it then becomes probable that a large number of black children are passed off as virtually uneducable merely because they have not yet acquired the ability to articulate in the formal curriculum setting.

In order to understand the socialization process of a black child, one must review, however briefly, the struggle of all black people in a prejudiced environment and the child's own relentless quest to define himself within the framework of a white-dominated society. As Dodson (*2*) points out, "It is probably impossible for a youth who is a member of a group which is powerless to grow

to maturity without some trauma to the perception of himself because of the compromised position of his group."

The problem of identity, the effects of cultural shock, the escape from the old stereotypes of black people, all are uppermost in my mind as I relate the major points that are peculiar to the socialization of black children in America. A quarter of a century ago, Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal wrote about the invisible black American whose messages are written in invisible ink.

The self-image of the black child is formulated during his early socialization process. The self-image results from social interaction and language, with language being the chief means through which an individual learns about his world. Through identification the child takes on the values of others.

We must provide the black child with instructional materials, real life situations, meaningful experiences, and values that will give him a positive self-image. John Dewey said earlier in the century, "I believe that image is a great instrument of instruction; what a child gets out of any subject is simply the image he himself forms with regard to it" (*3*:22). The black child must be allowed to identify with those things that provide a positive self-image. His strengths can and ought to be cultivated.

The great German philosopher Goethe once said, "Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being." Whitney Young said, "There is no better way to reach the black child than through his books. He must see himself in books, as he is, as he can be . . . . Omission of these crucial images in books . . . tells the black child . . . YOU HAVE NO IMAGE TODAY AND NO FUTURE TOMORROW." [*Caps mine.*]

There is no need to compensate for what educators so offhandedly refer to as educational deficits, including limited verbal ability. What the black child brings to the classroom and what he needs are to be understood from his point of view. As Eisenberg (*4*) points out, we must build on the child's strengths and not emphasize his so-called weaknesses. Eisenberg suggests that innercity children have learned to survive by doing rather than by talking, that they possess a kind of body language and grace, and that they have a style that is physical rather than verbal. They are visually oriented.

Other positive aspects of the innercity child include the fact that this youngster has a sense of being a part of a large extended family, which becomes as large as the community in which he grows. This child tends to have family and group values rather than individualistic ones. He has genuine equalitarian values. The black child has a know how for survival, and that is an intellectual art and not an exercise in an Oliver Twist enterprise of petty theft. These children are externally oriented rather than introspective. Questions about how people feel are less meaningful to them than questions about what people do. The thinking of innercity children tends to be concrete rather than abstract. The logic they display is inductive rather than deductive. The cognitive style of the innercity child tends to be slow, careful. (Street gangs call it "keeping your cool.") These

children are excellent masters at the art of role playing because they have a great physical and visual style which has nothing to do, of course, with such stereotype statements as, "All Negroes have rhythm."

The knowledge imparted in the formal curriculum should be meaningful, i.e., relevant to the black child's socioeconomic condition, his extended family lifestyle, and his basic collective or group values. Having been freed from parental overprotection, he is ready to accept responsibility. One can begin to acquire a healthy respect for the black innercity child if only one realizes that he has learned to negotiate the jungle of the slums. The educator must learn to understand the relationship between the child's behavior and his environment. His basic need is to be *understood*!

Clark (*1*) says, "The educational institution should specifically, therefore, concern itself only with such matters as superior teaching, extra stimulation, educational enrichment, with a basic understanding of the socialization process, and an understanding of the socioeconomic influences upon a child's learning."

I hope we all encourage the use of language arts and the use of literature as a greater resource in the education of black and other minority children. As Young (*6*) suggests, "If Negro children go on finding themselves excluded from textbooks, their motivation to learn will be further damaged."

John Dewey states in his Pedagogic Creed, ". . . the school must represent present life, life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, neighborhood, or playground . . . . Much of education fails because it neglects the fundamental principle of the school as a form of community life" (*3*:22-23).

What the black child from the innercity brings to the classroom is knowledge from a world in which he has learned to ***survive***, skills from a socialization process that has engendered in him the capacity for creativity, improvisation, responsibility, and ability to deal with real problems from a very real world of poverty and deprivation.

What the black child from the urban or suburban community brings to any formal curriculum is himself. On the other hand, his basic psychological, emotional, and academic needs are the same as any other child's from any ethnic background. Minority group children have all the potential of any other children.

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The Black Child and His Reading

Ethel Richard

Any examination of the Afro-American child and his books must start with an assessment of his needs. This exploration is good since it refreshes and sharpens points of view. Sometimes, also, such study brings to mind old knowledge that may be useful again with new youngsters under new conditions. Most definitely, being a member of the family of man, the Afro-American child has the same needs as any other child of any ethnic group. What is different is conditions in the United States that are opposed to common sense yet are true in fact.

A fact is that the Afro-American child's parents, older siblings, aunts, uncles, and entire kinship have hobnobbed and still hobnob with the "best people" of this country. They have associated most intimately with these best people from the kitchen, dining room, yard, and garage while serving as cooks, waitresses, maids, yardmen, handymen, chauffeurs, and last, but very importantly, as chambermaids or bedmates. This association, definitely economic in basis, invaded the entire social, political, mental, emotional, and physical fabric of Afro-American life. Through this primarily economic contact, the values and aspirations of the dominant white middle class were and are transplanted into the black ghettos and thus into the Afro-American child. What the black child sees in this transplanting are economic standards placing premiums on home ownership, cars, and abundant food and clothing – not always for bodily welfare and protection only but also for fad.

At the same time he sees ethical values that are false or skewed. The black child learns about miscegenation in a nonacademic, nonmoralistic way. The religious or legal issues of the act bother him very little. What he sees as false is the white father's claim of attachment to his white family while the part white

family is being denied. The black child looks around his ghetto and at self and sees few, if any, Afro-Americans whose blood is unmixed with the white majority. This survey tells him many things. It tells him white religious standards are false; that white concern for humanity is unreal; and of course, that he, the mixed-blooded, is a reject. The ramifications of this realization are great, especially since the Afro-American child can seldom be told that his people are from a specific African tribe or come from a particular region. And so the American black child, decultured, comes to long for the economic affluence of the white middle class and strives to practice the gamut of behaviorial practices that he sees white America practicing. He is striving to give himself a culture. Black children who read delve into books and hold up for scrutiny the range of white values. Forced to discover culture patterns by which they can live, they get from reading and from other media fixed ideas about themselves and white America. They formulate definite ideas about the present and future relationships of the two groups. Books are second only to work in offering the black child direct contact with the makers of American life.

What do they find in these books? If a person were a child prior to 1940, most of what he found was utterly ego destroying. If he lived in a section of this nation where he was permitted to use a library, he probably found Uncle Remus and Dr. Doolittle books. If he were exposed to a good library, he might have located *Araminta* by Evans, Lattimore's *Junior, A Colored Boy of Charleston,* Means' *Shuttered Windows,* or Bontemps' *Sad Faced Boy.* The last four were, in my opinion, a good start in providing print for black children.

Then the idea seems to have gotten around that the black child should figure as the subject of juvenile books more often. As a result, the black reader of the forties had a little wider choice. Added to previous offerings were such books as Le Grand's *Saturday for Samuel* and *American Caravan* by F. Frost. These are horrible throwbacks. Let me tell a bit about them. *Saturday for Samuel* is about a black family of four in rural Georgia. In addition to the parents, there are a boy and a girl. They go to town on Saturday to purchase groceries. Having been cautioned not to spend the grocery money on candy, lemonade, etc., the father does just that. Then Samuel, the boy, dances on the street. Coins he receives replace the food money. The illustrations, unbelievable stereotypes of poor black rural folk, do not leave out one watermelon seed or stomach rub. The text complements the pictures perfectly. I quote:

> And his mother's name was Marietta, Henrietta, Nominator, Sweet Potato, Minnie Blake, Wide Awake, Clara Day, Susie Blay, Josephine, Daisy, Corncob, Ella Lu Willis. Samuel called her Maw.

In *American Caravan,* a white family travels around the country. This travel tale uses rebuses as part of the text. Here is an excerpt:

> The night when they camped by the sound of the sea
> Under a great boughed live oak (rebus of a *tree*)
> Juniper said that since Negroes were free,
> Why couldn't she have that cute (rebus of a black child) pickaninny

They'd seen at the (rebus of a *shack*) a mile or so back?
He's so cunning and fat and laughing and (rebus of a *black* blob)
He hasn't a name, but I'd call him Mack!

The last quote is from a 1944 publication. The first was a 1941 release. They were released at a time when, supposedly, American awareness and concern for the value and dignity of human life were great. This country entered a war in December 1941. America was going to stop Hitler's genocide of Jews. At home, spiritual genocide continued through books of the type described.

This parallel may seem farfetched to you. If so, I would remind you that 7-10-year-old black children in 1941 were 27-30-years-old at the beginning of the revolutionary sixties. Think of black America's leadership – revolutionary, moderate, and conservative – and what I'm saying is more meaningful. Cleaver was about 5 years old when the picture book *Saturday for Samuel* came out. Imamu Baraka (LeRoi Jones) was under 10.

Now, all of the books of the forties did not tell of blacks in a negative way. *Jannie Belle* by Ellen Tarry started the decade off with the premise that the black child was human and acceptable. It was, in my opinion, however, a patronizing book. Later in the forties worthy items appeared such as Beim's *Two is a Team,* De Angeli's *Bright April,* Faulkner's *Melindy's Medal,* Jackson's *Call Me Charlie,* and Mean's *Great Day in the Morning.*

More and more the black children entered print. The child of the fifties was exposed to all titles of the past, good and bad. He witnessed a great amount of discussion over books about him. He saw the struggle to remove from libraries *Little Black Sambo, Epaminondas,* and other titles degrading him. He also saw the start of a new type book – the here and now story which touched issues of the day but with little depth. This was a hopeful sign. Most such books weren't necessarily great, but the honesty was appreciated. *Lady Cake Farm* by Hunt is an example of such a book.

The swift pace of the sixties saw a continuation of the change started in the fifties. A retrospective view reveals that the black child has never had enough books about himself, except for the bad. The worst of the bad are so bad that the black child rejects them, his parents reject them, and black society rejects them with a deep resentment. This resentment moves close to the explosion point when one meets the pseudocultured white intellectual who thinks *Little Black Sambo* is a great story (it has all the proper elements in the proper proportions) and who says he never associated it with anyone. "Sambo is just a cute little colored boy, saving himself by being quite clever, and he did enjoy the pancakes made with ghee." Yet worse for the child than these tales which he openly resents are those stories in which he is degraded greatly but is only incidentally present in the book. In my opinion, Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is such a book. Twice I have been told that I am too sensitive and that this title is very popular with the children of Watts. My reply to that is that unless other things that are very positive are poured into Watts, look for a

mighty upheaval when the present black children reach 25-30 years of age. After all, the Oompa-Loompas little black people have been removed from Africa where they were starving and had "never seen a white man," and they are happy in the chocolate factory. The Watts people have been removed from Africa. No – let me state this in the first person, as an average Mr. Black Man: I am Watts of the east coast. I have been removed from Africa and fused into the new race, Afro-American; and I have seen a white man. In fact, I see him too much at the wrong time collecting on payday. Most important, if I have a job in the chocolate factory, which I have if I made it past the union's color bar, I sure ain't eating the chocolate or much of any butter, cream, and sweets. In other words, the children of Watts may have found a way to feed their egos with the print provided. But they may also be building up for a reaction that will surely hurt us blacks, but will hurt you, too. And *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is only one. Stretching back through the years are many, many books with more subtle built-in hurts for blacks.

When the black child picks up a book, several factors other than his color keep him aware of blackness. He is black and blackness should stay with him, but not in ways that cut his spirit, undermine his intellect, and disturb him emotionally. Traditionally, he has been aware of his blackness when he looks at books because of the absence of black children in the pictures. Even in photographically illustrated books blacks have been omitted. In other instances, blacks have been artificially included. Other stories have harped upon the blackness of characters just to be sure the black reader is aware of this inclusion. These and many other less noticeable hints have developed in the black reader an astuteness about authors and books which is greater than his reported ability to read. So it is not unusual for a black child to tell me that a white person wrote a particular book. Questioning will reveal why he thinks so. The reasons are generally good. Sometimes a child is shrewd enough to say that the author means well or that the book is pointless. Sometimes he will say that it was a great book. Above all, our children tend to demand reading materials that relate to *now*. They do not push away all the history or fiction of the old days, but it must be that which is excellent.

It seems to me that a principal purpose of the writer must be to talk with someone remote in time or space. The writer may not hear the reply, but someone does. Also, a people can sometimes communicate with other peoples through its writers. The black child in his ghetto has had few writers to send messages to the white child for him. Most of the messages the black child has received have been from white writers. Some of the literature is of value, but more is needed.

Certainly more reliable books about blacks need to reach white America. More books about black pioneer children rather than slave children are needed, for black children are very much aware of the slavery period. Books about the child from an interracial home are needed as well as books about the welfare

child, the black adopted child, the black child during periods of national or racial crisis, the out-of-wedlock child, and the child whose militancy has outpaced his parents. Books are needed about black unwed mothers, about black families who have moved to the isolation of suburbia, and of course about drug abuse by black parents and children.

Messages from the black community on the juvenile level are really just beginning. These books by black writers are directed at anyone, I suppose, but have special meaning for the black child. They bring ghetto life into some perspective for him. The "Luther" books by Brunsic Brandon, Jr., while essentially cartoons, can carry brilliant messages both ways. For example, in *Right on Luther!,* Pee Wee is asked by Luther if he had dinner. Pee Wee replies, "Yeah, chicken." When Luther asks, "Don't you like chicken?" Pee Wee replies, "It's O.K. Luther, have you ever seen a chicken?" "No. Why?" asks Luther. Pee Wee answers, "Luther, I don't see how anything can live with nothing but backs and wings." Exaggerated though that may be, this kind of "in group" humor enables the black child to laugh at his inexpensive, often monotonous diet, and it tells the white child volumes about ghetto economics.

It is to be hoped that more children's books with such two-way use will be written. Many exist now, but because of culture variations some need an intermediary to interpret them to one group or to the other. In the past year and a half several unusual books have appeared. One is *Sounder* by Armstrong. Another is its sequel, *Sour Land.* I consider the first a description of black experience in this land by a white who was well aware that the disgraceful way in which blacks were treated was a reflection upon his own people. *Sour Land,* which seems autobiographical, shows the helplessness of two whites and a black man who try to buck the system and bring about justice to blacks. What is significant is that these books are a white effort at fruitful communication with both groups about the black experience. Jesse Jackson's *Sickest Don't Always Die the Quickest* seems to me the work of a black man who is also telling both groups something about the black experience. Jackson's book and *Sour Land* appear to take place about the same time. A fourth unusual book is *Portrait of Margarita* by Ruth Arthur. While not as well done as the other three books, it is rare in that it deals with a girl who is one quarter black but passes – never to return – into white life. This is an old story, but not one generally told in story form for children. It tells white children a truth which black children already know. These four books herald a new day in books for and about children. They herald fuller emergence of fundamental honesty in children's books, an honesty that will enable the child to examine suffering with compassion, baseness with anger, and injustice with indignation and determination. In this new honesty of writers the child will also be able to laugh because he will see the humorous as mirroring man's catholic nature.

Nothing has been said up to now about nonfiction. The black child's nonfiction reading has been somewhat more rewarding than his experience with

fiction, for he has had a few biographies of great black men and women. His need to know about his people, his own history, and his culture is great. Fortunately, that need has been fed through his churches (Negro History Week), through black newspapers, through such sources as calendars provided by black businesses, and through the oral tradition within the black family and community. However, the black child's history of his people remains inadequate and not so widely experienced as it should be. But the number of nonfiction books for black children is increasing rapidly.

We find the following when we look at the black child in relation to books:

1. When the black child reads he is astute about content, author, and life as it relates to him now. He questions white America's value system.
2. He wants and needs more about himself. Nonfiction is needed, but good fiction is particularly wanted.
3. He is growing in spiritual emancipation. He is proud and doesn't want to be white but is willing to have interchange with other ethnic groups.
4. He demands truth and integrity in his reading.
5. He demands that literature about blacks reflects the black's humanity.

Spanish Speaking American Children and Children's Books

Gilbert Martinez

> A young Mexican-American from California makes a plea: Who am I? I am a product of myself. I am a product of you and my ancestors. We came to California long before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. We settled California and the Southwestern part of the United States, including the present states of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas. We built the missions; we cultivated the ranches. We were at the Alamo in Texas, both inside and outside. You know we owned California – that is, until gold was found there. Who am I? I'm a human being. I have the same hopes you do, the same fears, the same desires, the same concern, the same abilities; and I want the same chance that you have to be an individual. Who am I? In reality I am who you want me to be.

Genocide is not limited to physical force. Educational genocide has destroyed generations of Mexican-Americans. In spite of place names, in spite of architectural and musical influences, in spite of the millions of people who are a living reminder of the part that Spain and Mexico played in forming the character of the Southwest, in spite of all these, the Mexican-American is an alien, unknown in his own land. His history and culture are either ignored or romanticized. On the one hand, the Mexican is pictured as the peon who, hat in hand, holds the reins for the rich rancher in the movies or as the Frito Bandito on TV. On the other hand, he is the glamorous hidalgo, the ambassador of goodwill for the city of San Diego and is a participant in the Rose Bowl Parade. Between the fanciful extremes of the peon and the hidalgo is the ordinary Mexican-American. Probably the most telling observations ever to be printed about the Mexican-American come from the pages of the May 23, 1966, issue of *Newsweek*: "We're the best kept secret in America."

Popular American usage does not expressly distinguish between the Mexican National and the American-born citizen of more or less remote Mexican or Spanish ancestry. Popular imagination mixes them both into a stereotype that is at once quaint and threatening. The image of the Mexican peon, asleep against the wall of his adobe hut or at the foot of the saguaro cactus, perpetuates a false stereotype. At best he wears only sandals on his feet. He is lazy and given to putting things off until mañana. This picturesque fellow and his burro adorn the menus and neon signs of restaurants and motels all across the country. At some point in his life the peon wakes up, takes a swig of tequila, puts on his sombrero, and emigrates to the United States by swimming across the Rio Grande. Of course, once in the United States he loses his picturesque and harmless ways and becomes sinister and cruel.

The myth of the lazy, jealous, passive, fatalistic Mexican is perpetuated in many books. In *A Treasury of American Folklore,* edited by B. A. Bothin, there is the following celebrated peroration, attributed to Judge Roy Bean in *The Law West of the Pecos.*

> Carlos Robles, you have been tried by twelve true and good men, not men of your peer but as high above you as heaven is of hell, and they've said you're guilty of rustlin' cattle. Time will pass and seasons will come and go; spring with its waving green grass and heaps of sweet smelling flowers on every hill and in every dale. Then will come sultry summer, with her shimmerin' heat waves in the baked horizon; and fall with her yellow harvest moon and the hills growing brown and golden under a sinking sun; and finally winter, with its bitin' whinnin' wind and the land will be mantled with snow. But you won't be there to see any of them, Carlos Robles; not by a damn sight because it's the order of this court that you be took to the nearest tree and hanged by the neck till you're dead, dead, dead, you olive colored son-of-a-billy goat.

The prisoner, it is said, did not know a word of English and missed the flavor of Roy Bean's oratory. Only rarely in American literature of the Southwest does one encounter a portrayal of a Mexican-American that is both sympathetic and unsentimental.

In this age of search for identity, the Mexican-American finds himself not truly American, not truly Mexican, not truly Spanish. He finds himself suspended between two cultures, neither of which claims him. As a result, he withdraws into himself and away from the larger society. A girl in East Los Angeles said, "We look for others like ourselves in the history books, for something to be proud of for being Mexican-Americans. All we see in books, magazines, films, and TV shows is the stereotype of a dark, dirty, smelly man with a tequila bottle in one hand, a dripping taco in the other, a sarape wrapped around him, and a big sombrero." I am sure all of you know what I'm talking about. An example is the TV commercial for a deodorant that shows a Mexican riding a horse. The man looks sweaty. A voice comes on as the Mexican sprays himself, "If it works for him, it'll work for you."

Let me take you back to the life of a representative six-year-old Mexican-American. His parents have little formal education – seventh grade at the most. Their lack of formal education does not mean that they are stupid or naive about the world around them. In fact, they realize that it has been a hard life, and being of the Mexican-American culture they do love their child tremendously. Education, they know, will help their child achieve more than they. They know education is needed in order for the child to become a member of the mainstream of society. The child is conditioned by its parents to expect to go to school. At school he will learn to function in the society in which he lives.

Being normal, the child has the same anxiety all children have about the first day of school. Come opening day, he arrives at school full of hope. But his first encounter with school is seeing his mother, many times at the point of tears, trying to explain to the teacher or principal in English everything that needs to be learned about the child. The child begins to realize that his mother cannot communicate in English. He has had his initial shock, and school hasn't even started.

The Mexican-American child brings much to school, but the school does not appreciate what he brings. The child's language, culture, and experience are considered a liability instead of an asset. Shortly after entering the primary grades, the Mexican-American child begins to realize that he is different and that difference is taken by society at large as a sign of inferiority. He learns this not only from his schoolmates but, frequently, from his teachers who may betray ill-disguised contempt for the schools and neighborhood in which they work. Then, there are the textbooks, library books, and magazines wherein the youngsters read of the cruelty of the Spaniards toward the Indians, of the Spaniards' greed for gold, of the Spanish Inquisition, of Mexican bandits, and of the massacre at the Alamo.

In addition to this kind of teaching, Mexican-American youngsters are kept ignorant of the real contributions made by their forebears to the so-called winning of the West. At a time when they should be learning pride in their history and in their own particular kind of Americanism, these children are made to feel that they do not rightly participate in the American enterprise, that they are intruders in their own land. Mexican-American children can do well scholastically but only in schools that not only help them to adjust to Anglo society but also foster pride in their origins, histories, cultures, and biolingual backgrounds.

Our schools up to now have been saying they can educate those whose molds fit the curriculum – but not many Mexican-Americans have had any hand in that curriculum. Instead the school – which really means society – talks about "disadvantaged children," in essence saying they are inferior and not a great deal can be expected of them. These children are then put into disadvantaged – that is, inferior – programs that make it almost certain the children will not accomplish much. A child who does not learn to read by five or six years of age may

later learn to read. But if he is taught that he is disadvantaged, that he is inferior, at five or six, he may never overcome it. Thousands of Mexican-American youngsters have been tabbed as disadvantaged because they didn't come to school speaking English. Just think – they came to school with the rich potential to be bilingual – a most desired personal and national value in almost every country in the world except this one – and neither the school nor the society it serves recognizes this cultural richness.

Mexican-American education for the seventies has started with what our youngsters – disadvantaged as they may be – are really saying to us: We do not need new institutions but, instead, people who are willing to accept the responsibility for the consequences of their work and, if necessary, fight for the resources needed to get the job done. We must totally endorse and support this cry. This is the accountability that every institution must insist upon – learning accountability – not just fiscal accountability. Educators must also recognize that high morale, which is one of the characteristics of an effective institution, is related to value infusion and pride. Few effective institutions consider their participants disadvantaged. Education for all, and especially for the Mexican-American, must begin with the elimination of this "disadvantaged child" syndrome by which educators and those related to education have been permitted to escape responsibility for their failures.

What does this charge mean for all of us? It means that *you* and *I* must be prepared to operate in an educational environment in which there are zero rejects. Educational accountability will be based on what is done for each child. Failures will be institutional failures – not failures of the child or the parent. It means that it is imperative for all concerned to join together to see that the school faithfully carries out this new responsibility. Education must become meaningful to all children regardless of background. It means that we must proclaim and demand that the school has and must have the primary responsibility for fostering our highest national goal: that the destiny of this nation lies in the strength of its human diversity.

This decade must see, if this society is to survive, the elimination of all vestiges of an educational system that has been geared to exclude rather than to include. Education must assume the responsibility for the past programs of cultural, linguistic extermination – and it must assume the responsibility for creating a new system that produces a young individual whose attitudes and values reflect a culturally cognizant institution. We must stop alienating the Mexican-American child against his parents, and the background from which he comes, through the books and society as a whole that tell him his heritage is bad.

Education for the Chicano must strike a blow at those who profess to use education as a weapon for exclusion. Education must use all its resources to instill in all people the vital belief that the United States is a country united – that the bonds of unity are strengthened by the richness of difference, by linguistic and cultural diversity, and by the rich commitment that makes each

individual a sacred entity whose destiny is bound to that of every other person by our American belief in the paramount worth of the individual.

There are approximately 10-12 million Spanish speaking citizens in our country. By 1980 there will be more than 15 million. We want all those students who speak Spanish to be bilingual, bicultural agents for a Western Hemisphere of close human cooperation. We want all students in those areas where languages and cultures are pluralistic to become bilingual, bicultural agents for the realization of the strength of a world society where human diversity is promoted and not destroyed.

Puerto Rican Children in the United States

Antonia Pantoja

Puerto Rican children in the United States need books whose themes depict Puerto Rican culture and history and translate Puerto Rican children's present life experiences into artistic, poetic, and acceptable terms. In other words, Puerto Rican children need to learn about themselves as important parts of a world that was and is, in order to develop a healthy self-image with which to successfully manage a world that is hostile and difficult.

The United States of America is currently engaged in a civil rights revolution that is understood by most Americans as a black and white struggle or a race phenomenon. An American Indian friend of mine expressed the other dimension of the civil rights revolution in the following terms: "The other half of the civil rights revolution is cultural in nature. It has to do with American Indians, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican-Americans. These groups are not concerned with their racial definition. They are vitally concerned with their cultural definition and affiliation." The intense preoccupation of the nation with the black and white race issue has emerged out of the success that black Americans have had in making all Americans aware of their needs. This is one step forward our black brothers have achieved; but it concerns itself with only part of the problem. We must complete the task and make the country aware of the other large groups of Americans who are deprived of their civil rights, kept in poverty, exploited, and left voiceless; and we must approach the problem of culture as well as race. The Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, and the Indians are all different from the overall society. These three groups speak languages other than English and continue to carry cultural behavior patterns and cultural values different from the general society.

Puerto Rico was orginally inhabited by Indians who had their own way of life, language, and history. The Taino Indians, a part of the Arawaks from Central America, were the people found on the island when Columbus and Spanish sailors discovered Boriquen, the island's Indian name, in 1493. During the conquest and colonization period, the white man from Europe started the mixture of race and culture which is the Puerto Rican today. Among the significant events that went into the development of the island, one of the most important was the bringing of African slaves, adding the third racial and cultural component to Puerto Rico. The Spanish settlers established the core-backbone of the culture because they were the most numerous, and their culture and language were more fully developed. Other European whites who came learned Spanish and acquired the patterns of behavior of the island. Taíno culture influences can still be found in food and in the names of places and objects. African influence is evident in the folklore, some of the words, and part of the popular music and musical instruments. Today, there are some white Puerto Ricans and some Negro Puerto Ricans, but the large majority of Puerto Ricans are a mixture of Indian, white, and Negro. This mixture makes it impossible to classify Puerto Ricans racially, and Puerto Ricans cannot engage in the black-white hostilities created by the present climate in the United States.

Puerto Ricans speak Spanish. Since 1493, a total of 478 years of history have taken place. Literature was developed in the Spanish language on the island. An economy was developed. Various forms of government and two colonial relationships have taken place. Traditions, holidays, modes of dress, typical customs, and specific ways for people to relate to one another have evolved, all peculiarly developed out of the specific mixture of people who have lived together over these 478 years. The result is the Puerto Rican culture.

During the years Puerto Rican life has developed and flourished, men and women, such as José de Diego, Gautier Benítez, Lola Tío, Alejandro Tapia, Luis Llorens Torres, Luis Pales Matos, Julia de Burgos, Rene Marques, Enrique Laguerre, and Pedro Juan Soto have written poetry, dramas, novels, and short stories. Heroic figures fought in wars or wrote fighting documents for the defense and independence of their island. Some lost their lives; others lost their freedom and spent long years in prison. Others were sent into exile. Among these, such names as Aqueybana II, the Taíno cacique, Ramón E. Betances, Eugenio M. de Hostos, and Luis Muñoz Rivera are known in Puerto Rico and elsewhere. Artists and musicians emerged. In periods of crisis different political ideologies produced such figures as Luis Muñoz Marín and Pedro Albizu Campos. However, neither the books published in Spanish in Puerto Rico nor works produced in English by Puerto Ricans in the United States are known by non-Puerto Rican Americans. Americans have very little interest in Puerto Rican culture. The migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States has evoked only hostility when it has evoked any reaction; otherwise, Puerto Ricans are invisible to the mass media and in the book and audiovisual materials.

It is evident that the country has failed, after trying for more than two centuries, to enforce the demand that all cultural and racial groups coming to the United States of America either renounce their cultures and adopt the behavior and values of the north European group or merge into one group to create a new "indigenous American type." Different cultural groups have resisted giving up their heritages and completely accepting north European values and behaviors. So today we find ourselves trying to find the best way of achieving a "cultural pluralism" which allows different cultures and races to live in the United States while preserving their communal lives and preserving the significant portions of their cultures within the context of political and economic integration and American citizenship (*1*).

It is with such realization that I leave with you the message that Puerto Rican children, as well as other Spanish speaking children, need books that help them understand and love their cultural heritage and books that help them understand their experiences in their new home in order to develop as healthy human beings. Other children need to learn in the same manner about these Puerto Rican schoolmates and neighbors so that they can respect them as equals.

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Who Speaks for a Culture?

Pura Belpré White

Writing on multi-ethnic themes has become a necessity these days when the search for identity permeates the atmosphere involving a large segment of the population. The responsibilities of an author dealing with these themes are great and of utmost importance. In his hands rests the presentation of a group of human beings to the reader, who will form his own ideas according to the image the author projects. Whether the author is part of the ethnic group or an outsider writing about it, he has the same responsibility toward the group and the reader.

Foremost in the author's mind should be the criteria for his writing: knowledge of subject matter, imagination, truthfulness, and above all, understanding. He should research carefully for authenticity, steep himself with the traditional cultural roots from which his characters will spring, and thus create real characters, not symbols. He should bring relevancy into his writing and present characters with whom the reader can identify. He should give the reader the sense of belonging, which is so needed, by interrelation with other groups in a natural everyday life.

A few "don'ts" provide guidelines of importance. There should not be compromise in the writing process, regardless of outside pressures, nor unfounded generalizations, nor injection of personal opinions and ideologies into the weaving of the story. Stereotype characterizations and patronizing attitudes should be ruled out. Let creativeness rule out mediocrity.

Cities are the theatres wherein these people live out their lives. Some live in comfort away from slums and ghettos. Others in their very midst, victims of

economic conditions and prejudices, are living in their poverty with dignity, preserving their family structures, their cultures and traditions, and their faiths, hopes, and, yes, even their humor. Here then, is living source material for eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand. Let it be used, in any form or fashion, with the dignity and truthfulness that it deserves. This is, after all, the duty and responsibility of the author who chooses to deal with it.

Who Speaks for a Culture?

Sharon Bell Mathis

Dear People,

Little Black Sambo rides again.

What a shame it is that, even today, black people are still in bondage and that little black babies must be born with the systematic and ever-tightening shackles imposed by white America. One group of people to thank for this enslavement are today's publishers.

It is a chic and accepted fact that only white writers can write and publishers are paying great amounts of money in an attempt to prove it. There are more books written about black people, "commissioned" of white authors, than there are books about blacks, written by blacks. It isn't even considered abnormal, except by black authors, that certain white writers write nothing but black stuff or what they *think* is black. The black writer, the Chicano, and the Puerto Rican find their works being rejected constantly. Why is it that publishing houses do not believe the very effective advertising commercial that says, "There's nothing like the real thing, baby."

I have *never* read a so-called black story written by a white that wasn't either blatantly or subtly insulting to the black culture. Let me say to all readers, no white person can ever, ever, ever write a black story. There are so many of these "Delightful" stories on the market. (I capitalize the *D* in delightful and enclose the word in quotation marks because that is how it is most often said to me by whites. I did, however, leave out the exclamation marks.) It is almost physically impossible for me to keep from screaming at times like this. But, for those times when I choose to answer, faces begin to go through changes. Incidentally, I enjoy this exchange because the person usually leaves me alone in a few moments. Sometimes, it doesn't take that long!

Let me give you a few examples of why I say little Black Sambo rides again:

What's New, Lincoln?, Dale Fife, Coward-McCann, 1970. You know he is a so-called black kid by the name of Lincoln. But my complaint is not his name but the names of his twin sisters. Their names are Sissy and Sassy. Let me tell you that if any white person thinks that any black parents would give such names to their pretty black babies, then that person is insane and should be institutionalized. Is this still plantation time? In this case, the slave owners are publishing houses who say to their white writers, "Yes, yes! A grand story!" How else could something like *What's New, Lincoln?* come rolling off the presses in 1970? White children who read it, tell me – what impression do you get of the black? And I say to black children, "Forget it. This ain't you!" This book leaves me so depressed that even when I use it as a teaching tool in my home with my own children, with the many children I teach, and as a staff member of the children's literature division of the D.C. Black Writers' Workshop, I still feel I have not done enough. But, know this: black teachers, mothers, librarians, and persons dealing with children and books across the country use books like this to teach about white racism. Some of the best kinds of these "talks" that I have heard given to black children have come from the black male. He seems to add a dimension that is astounding to listen to!

So, right on, Dale Fife. You're helping the cause. And I respect the fact that you keep your white bias out front. I prefer you to all the false grins and smiles of the so-called liberal.

Another example: It was time for a black "something" to win a Newbery. So, a *something* did win. It was called *Sounder*. It was written by a white writer by the name of William Armstrong. While white people applauded wildly, black people were insulted. It started off admitting failure by stating that the tale was supposedly told to a white man (the author) by a black man. *Everybody* knows what the white man has done to the black man since 1619, and by now it would seem that the white man would be wary of the black man. I cannot say that the black man never told this "tale" to William Armstrong. But he damn sure didn't tell what Mr. Armstrong tried to record. The book is filled with white myths about the black. All niggers can sing and hum. All niggers look alike so there's no need to give them names. The only person with any visible intelligence is the dog, Sounder.

It is very difficult for me to discuss this book, and it would be of no use. I shall go to my grave bitter about it and for the injustices it does to Afro-Americans. One more thing, there is a quotation which the "boy" hears and remembers years later and supposedly it helps him live stronger and better. The quotation for this black boy comes from Montaigne, a French essayist.

So, I say to blacks, "Use this book to show what America is doing to us. Go into the streets, if you can, and tell our little black sisters and brothers that this *Sounder* story is not you. Tell them not to cry but to grow stronger. It is a white tale, written for white people."

American publishers have systematically distorted or ignored, through the books they allow to be published, the contribution of the black to the growth of this country. This is our country, we can tell our own story.

Today, a certain doctor is lauded and he should be. He performed the first successful heart transplant. But what of the first successful heart operation by Dr. Daniel Williams, a black physician? Alexander Dumas, author of *The Three Musketeers,* was black. One of the greatest poets that ever lived was Robert Browning. Robert Browning was a black man (*1*). The list is endless. The distortion was started in 1619 and continues today. It continues in every part of life in America. I write, today, of publishers because they are the reason for this discussion.

You ask who speaks for a culture. I'll tell you who is doing it. Ezra Jack Keats, a white painter, has made a fortune with his "Contributions." What a good sense of the market he has! Shane Stevens, Milton Meltzer, William Styron. This is the situation.

Now, I quote three other well-known blacks:

Don L. Lee (*4*):

> . . . first, I cannot speak the Chinese language (which means I cannot read the literature in the original); second, I never lived among the Chinese people – so that I know very little about their daily life; third, my only knowledge of Chinese religion comes from what I read – which puts me at a disadvantage of accepting someone else's interpretation, which is always dangerous; fourth, my knowledge of Chinese music is terribly limited; fifth, my knowledge of Chinese folklore and dance is negligible; and finally, I've never been to China, so would be unfamiliar with the references used in the literature. Have I made myself clear?

Further on, Lee states:

> William Styron may have let James Baldwin spend some time on his farm, but obviously knowing and listening to Baldwin, as perceptive as Baldwin is, doesn't give Styron the sensitivity necessary for recording the adventures of one of our greatest black heroes, Nat Turner. David Littlejohn may have taken a few courses in black literature and sat in on some black writers' conferences, but obviously for him all of that was a prerequisite for a bad, pretentious book that Hoyt Fuller rightly maintains should be avoided "like the plague." Edward Margolies lives in the heart of the literary capital: that's where he should stay, and leave the native sons alone. Irving Howe and Richard Gilman had best stay with Jewish and WASP literature respectively, and leave their natural opposites alone; their ignorance is showing in whiteface.

Lizabeth Gant (*3*):

> I know they dig trying to keep track of what's spinning round our brains, but is a white interpretation of the black spirit always profitable to the true Source? Guess so.

Tom Feelings (*2*):

> . . . a story of the Black Experience must come directly from one who has lived it. Authenticity or syntheticness would hinge upon that life experience.

Incidentally, to Tom Feelings who was runner-up for the Caldecott and Julius Lester who was runner-up for the Newbery – for the book they wrote and illustrated so beautifully, *To Be A Slave* – let me say, my black brothers, "Y'all ain't no runner-up for nothing. I say you won. You were too damn good and they had no standard high enough for your work."

For greater BLACK literary power,
Sharon Bell Mathis

P.S. "Who speaks for a culture?" The answer is white America.

P.P.S. May I make a request? To those responsible for giving and maneuvering books among black kids, I ask you to give them books by their own people. Don't be fooled by those books which emphasize "white benevolence." If you have no books to give blacks that are written by blacks, tell them about 18-year-old black and beautiful John Steptoe. And if you're for real, they'll get your message. John Steptoe didn't wait. He began to write and illustrate his own books. Believe in two facts: Black kids are intelligent. And we are a beautiful people.

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Who Speaks for a Culture?

Sandra Weiner

I would suppose that the responsibility of an author dealing with children's books is to create the kind of atmosphere that allows the young reader to form unprejudiced feelings about ethnic groups. My own motive for doing both books, *It's Wings That Make Birds Fly* and *Small Hands, Big Hands* was a desire for personal involvement. In the course of my work I came to identify so closely with the subjects, who were blacks and Mexican-Americans, that I quickly forgot any sense of ethnic differences. I was then delighted to share my experiences through camera and words. Obviously, an author has a responsibility when writing about an ethnic group to present the subject in such a way that it will not inadvertently reinforce any prejudices her audience might harbor. But it seems to me a more serious responsibility is to preserve and explain the unique qualities of whatever ethnic group is involved. Ethnic groups have been able to survive and maintain their identities within our melting pot culture, often against difficult odds. It is hard to be a Mexican in California. It is harder still to be a Mexican migrant worker in California and survive.

A writer also has a responsibility to be aware that she, too, may have residual prejudices. These may surface in disguised form, for instance, as in subtle patronization of the subject. On the other hand, she must be wary of over-compensating. She does the ethnic group no service by being unrealistically sentimental or romantic.

The notion that many of us brought up in this liberal tradition seem to have is that if only the ethnic differences were not so distinctive, the natural process of assimilation would be able to proceed and all inequities would then disappear. But the melting pot is not melting, and perhaps there is nothing wrong with that.

Might there not be positive value in preserving ethnic identities, rather than imposing a conformity that would create a colorless society in the drabber sense of the word? Conformist societies do not necessarily insure justice. Instead, we must explore with honesty and insight the humanity of all people.

Members of a particular ethnic group, filled with a fierce and understandable pride in their people, may resent any approach to them by an outside observer. The extreme militant attitude is that the writer has no *right* to treat of any group but his own. This position strikes me as a restrictive point of view; it is as if to say that there is only one way to look at any given subject. In the past people writing of cultures and races other than their own have often been overtly patronizing or antagonistic. To conclude, however, that because past writers have been in error, new writers, writing from a new awareness of a particular group, cannot be fair and understanding and compassionate is to alienate that group even more completely from a society that through ignorance and distortion may already feel unreceptive. Ignorance will hardly be dispelled by more ignorance.

Certainly the views of the ethnic writer must be given full circulation, and a militant posture serves the purpose of accomplishing this goal perhaps even more effectively at times than a supplicating one. But to say that militancy is the only posture is to imply that only war solves social problems. Or it is to say that Italians are the only possible interpreters of Italy, or the Americans of America.

To carry the argument to its illogical conclusion, do black Americans, or for that matter Mexican-Americans, have no valuable insights to contribute about the American majority?

I see no reason to apologize for a sympathetic interest in an ethnic group, no matter how incomplete the portrait that emerges might be. I am convinced that learning about others who seem different from ourselves is one of the best ways of finding out who *we* really are. At any rate, that is my justification for the kind of photography and writing that I have done.

Who Speaks for a Culture?

Arlene Harris Kurtis

In 1902, Hutchins Hapgood wrote a book called *Spirit of the Ghetto.* It was about New York's newcomers, the Jews from eastern Europe.

Hapgood was a young reporter on New York's *Commercial Advocate*; he was an outsider to the Jewish culture. But he was a good reporter, and that was more important. He approached his study with wonder, researched his subject carefully, and used all his senses to feel the pulse and catch the spirit of the people about whom he was writing.

Not being of the culture may even have been an advantage. Sunk in their ghetto poverty, the Jews had no time to think of the spirit that was to make all things possible for them. It remained for an outsider to catch that spirit and, by portraying it, make the shunned newcomers human and comprehensible to the more established Americans.

Because of his book, strangers became neighbors. The way was opened for books by Jews, about Jews, to be widely read by those whose curiosity Hapgood had aroused.

A culture is a record of centuries. No one book can say all that is to be said about it. But a good book on an ethnic theme can inspire the reader to wish to make further discoveries of his own: to sample the food of the culture and hear its music; to see a movie about its heroes; to want to read other books about its people.

Even if an author is himself a part of a culture he is studying, he cannot encompass the whole of that culture's experience. I have written about the cultural group in which I have my roots, the Jewish-American. But I never saw the inside of a German death camp as have some of my fellow Jewish-Americans.

I was brought up in Orthodox Jewry, but many Jewish-Americans have had no religious training at any time. In some ways, everyone is an insider and an outsider even within his own culture.

And can a person ever feel a part of a culture not his own? Several years ago I undertook a study of the people of Puerto Rico, here and on the island. I was warmly welcomed in all the homes I visited. How much the Puerto Ricans' family life seemed like the family life I had experienced in my own home. I couldn't help feeling, too, that there were parallels between the Puerto Rican's pride in his island and that of the Jew for Israel. Insider or outsider, the writer must be alert to look beyond familiar assumptions, to search carefully, to grasp the true meaning of each aspect of a culture. One must be careful not to impose one's own values on another but to plumb the depths to uncover the uniqueness of a particular facet of a culture.

With these safeguards in mind, I affirm the author's right to explore and write about all cultures, not just his own. Others are welcome to explore and write about mine, as I have been welcomed to write about theirs.

After all, none of us can be completely described by an ethnic label. Most of us are composites of many cultures. Ours is a multi-ethnic society, and we are products of it. The first dance I learned as a child was the *Irish* jig. And I was warned in a whisper not to touch the livingroom lamps; they were *Chinese* porcelain. As a high school student, I sat in St. Patrick's in silent awe, watching Christmas Eve mass. Who has not felt the presence of the *Indian* in him as he walked through the woods? And who among us is untouched by the teaching of Moses?

We grow rich by sharing, and we must continue to share in an ever-widening circle. For we are all earthlings, sharing a spaceship that grows smaller each decade.

Labels and credentials of an author may be above reproach. But the only question for me is, has the author done a good job? The final crucible is the book itself.

How does it read? What insights can be gleaned from its narrative, its illustrations, its photographs? Does it convey a message that is useful, that can be supplied? Does it stimulate the reader with a desire to learn more?

If it does these things, it is a good book. The author's presence fades; the book takes on a life of its own.

Who Speaks for a Culture?

James C. Giblin

Who speaks for a culture? I'm not sure anyone does. A Spanish speaking Puerto Rican author living in New York City would no doubt have a very different point-of-view from a Spanish speaking Mexican-American author living in Los Angeles. Yet both might be considered spokesmen for the Spanish speaking minority in this country. The same would hold true for a black author who had spent all of his life in the agricultural South, as opposed to a black author who knew only life in a northern city like Cleveland or Detroit.

The answer to the question, then, would probably be that no one individual speaks for a culture, but many do, each from his particular vantage point. Taken together, these expressions can form a sort of mosaic, giving members of the minority groups a better understanding of the variations within their own subcultures and giving outsiders from the majority a view of worlds that may be as foreign to them as the lifestyle of fishermen on a Greek island.

But what of authors and artists who are members of the majority culture? Do they have a right to speak for any of our minority subcultures – in other words, to write and illustrate books about minority characters and their ways of life? In recent years, many spokesmen for different minority groups have said "No."

I think their insistence has been a healthy thing. In the past, too many white authors, editors, reviewers, librarians, and teachers have approached books about minority children in the spirit of do-gooding and charity. Out of ignorance, they have imposed white middle-class values, standards, and goals on a minority situation where they were often inappropriate, if not totally false. The result was far too many books which served no one – not the minority children, who no doubt realized consciously or unconsciously that such works painted untrue

pictures; and not the children of the majority, for whom they often merely bolstered existing misconceptions and prejudices about minority peoples.

It was and, I'm afraid, still is necessary to speak out loudly and even insultingly against such books and their authors. Would anyone listen otherwise? But where do authors from the majority culture go from here? Should they pack up their writing kits, retreat to the suburbs, and write only about life there? Some say "Yes." One respected associate of mine feels sincerely that the racial climate in this country is so heated today, the conscious and unconscious racism so ingrained in members of the majority, that it would be wise to invoke a moratorium on all books by majority authors about life in minority subcultures.

I am not ready to go that far for several reasons. For one thing, I am suspicious of rigid theoretical strictures applied to the creative process. Criticism of bad books is one thing; creation of good ones, another. Just as I feel that there can be many different spokesmen operating from many different points-of-view within the various minority subcultures, so I feel that some members of the white majority, by virtue of their outlooks, interests, and life experiences, *are* able to write of one minority subculture or another and should not be discouraged from doing so.

The larger danger is, of course, that the majority tends to want to listen to majority interpretations of minority experiences. It's more comfortable for them and in the past has been responsible for the silencing or ignoring of authors from various minorities. This attitude is being forcefully challenged today by minority critics – and rightly so.

But who is to judge whether a book from whatever source is an honest or dishonest expression of life within a culture? That is probably the most difficult question of all. So many conflicting critical voices have been raised on one barricade or another. Ultimately I can speak only from my own position as an editor and member of the white majority. Perhaps some of the criteria I apply will also be relevant to you. As a result of all the critical charges of racism in recent years, I find myself looking harder at and thinking more deeply about the implications of every fiction and nonfiction manuscript dealing with a minority culture that crosses my desk.

Are there conscious or unconscious stereotypings in characterization? Do the language and milieu ring true? Is white benevolence of one kind or another responsible for the solution of the characters' problems, or does the solution come from what the subjects themselves do? (You might be surprised at how frequently this factor crops up.)

Are the differences of life within the subculture presented positively or negatively? In other words, if rejection of the values of the subculture and adaptation to the ways of the white majority are presented as a positive goal, then I would seriously question the worth of the manuscript.

More vaguely, but no less importantly, do I get a feeling of being *with* the people in the manuscript or of looking at them from outside? The former is, of

course, one of the hallmarks of any good, alive story or nonfiction book, but I think it is especially crucial when a book is dealing with life in a minority subculture. A stance of detached observation is too often accompanied by a subtle condescension – a sense of looking from a distance at "those poor people."

If I basically like the manuscript as a piece of writing but have doubts, large or small, about its validity, then I will also try to get a reading of it by someone who is a member of the minority group in question – someone who knows more about its way of life than I do.

I must take into account, of course, that any reader, like any author, can finally speak only from *his* point of view – for again no one, I feel, can be the spokesman for a total culture – only for the part of it he knows.

Why do I and other editors take all this trouble? Because, we don't want to publish books that merely exploit in a superficial way the gulfs and divisions in our society any more than you want to offer them to your students.

The past decade has seen strident protests in so many areas, protests that can become numbing after a time. Sometimes I fear that those of us concerned with bringing books and children together may be growing weary of the abuse heaped on portrayals of minority cultures in books and would prefer to back off and ignore the questions that have been raised. Or we may delude ourselves that it is no longer so pressing a problem as it was because of the rash of books, especially those dealing with our urban minorities, that have appeared in the past few years.

These reactions could have very harmful consequences, both for the writing and publication of children's books and for the education of our children. There are so many questions that remain to be raised, let alone answered, not only about the role of minority subcultures in our society but about the habitual patterns of action and reaction in that society itself.

There are so many members of various subcultures who have something to say and the ability to say it who remain to be discovered, encouraged – and published. And there are so many members of the majority who also have something to say and the insight and perspective to realize that old attitudes and assumptions are no longer accepted without question as they were in 1950 or even in 1965.

This is no time to ignore or abandon the battle; this is the time to join it.

We Are Still Afraid

Nancy Larrick

Recently I brought a stack of picture books to my children's literature class and spread them out on the conference table. One was Jacob Lawrence's *Harriet and the Promised Land,* which was new to all but one member of the group, Mary Henderson, a substitute teacher.

Several weeks before, Mary had been called to substitute in a seventh grade class studying the Civil War period. When she collected materials to take to class, she included *Harriet and the Promised Land.* "But then, I thought a substitute has to be careful," she said, "so I took this book to the principal and asked him what he thought about my using it. He said I better not because the religious implications would make this a violation of the Supreme Court ruling that bans Bible reading in the school."

A cry of protest went up from the other teachers in the class, but Mary stood her ground and read from *Harriet and the Promised Land*:

Harriet hear tell

He was not alone.

and later on . . .

Now Harriet grew weary

To the Promised Land!

"But that's *not* religious teaching," cried one very articulate young teacher. Everyone seemed to concur.

"Maybe I shouldn't have mentioned it to the principal," Mary said. "If I had just gone ahead, he would never have known the difference."

"Oh, no, you did the right thing," said one member. "I hate to admit it, but a teacher has to be careful if she doesn't want to raise a stink." And every teacher in that group admitted she, too, would have checked with the principal and then abandoned *Harriet and the Promised Land.*

Would that principal have been concerned if the protagonist in Jacob Lawrence's book had been a white nurse or social worker? Was he, perhaps, using the Supreme Court ruling to conceal his own racial prejudice and his abiding fear of conflict with parents who might raise a stink? In any case, he successfully banned the life story of a black activist. And the teachers in my class were ready to agree although they had revealed no evidence of racial prejudice. Like many of the rest of us, these teachers have one standard that they will support in a sympathetic group but another standard for use when expedient. And so it happens that reasonable and tolerant individuals collapse under fear of controversy and line up with the prejudiced. We are dealing, then, with a two-headed monster – prejudice on the one side and fear on the other. The combination is poisonous.

The teachers I meet have only a handful of children from minority groups in their classes. Many have an all-white enrollment, live in all-white neighborhoods, and go to all-white churches. Because they are seldom put to the test, it is easy to assume they are without prejudice. But I am gradually learning that this assumption is wrong.

One of my colleagues on the Lehigh University faculty has been particularly interested in the education of emotionally disturbed children. A few years ago she made a study of about 300 such youngsters in innercity Philadelphia. These kids – many from broken homes and most of them doing poorly at school – are from low income families, often on welfare. The streets and alleys of their neighborhoods are littered with filth. Vandalism is rampant. Graduate students at Lehigh, listening to a report of this study, invariably picture the youngsters as black. Actually they are from Kensington – an all-white pocket in what is now a great black area in center city. White teachers in the Lehigh Valley assume that

poverty, family instability, and vandalism are attributes of blackness. The first time this prejudice came out in Dr. Grandovic's class, she was surprised. "Now I expect it," she says. "Because it has come up in four different groups, I am prepared for it and try to cope."

When it comes to recommending emotionally disturbed children for special aid, the same kind of teacher bias shows up. In some school systems, where the pupil population is largely nonwhite, almost no black child is recommended for the special counseling or teaching provided by the state. "It's not because they don't need it just as much as white children," said one psychologist who has worked in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania. "It's because they are black. Those teachers expect black children to be slow learners and troublemakers. Why waste money, they reason, on special services for children who will never be any different?"

The teachers I meet profess to have real understanding and concern for all children, including those of different ethnic groups. They talk a good line until they get down to cases. When they meet a children's book that includes a racially mixed cast, they write sympathetic notes, such as, "Good to use with Negro children." It just doesn't occur to most of these white teachers that their white pupils might read – happily and profitably – about nonwhite children.

One older teacher in my workshop last summer read Eve Merriam's *The Inner City Mother Goose* and then gave this report: "Not suitable because it pictures filth and violence. I couldn't use it with my sixth graders since they are all white, but it would be all right for the colored because they are used to living that way." A tall young man in blue jeans and sandals quietly set her straight about the term "the colored" and about the need for all children to know the innercity scene and its multiracial population. But I am sure this teacher would insist that she is acting not from prejudice but from the need to give her pupils books which are "suitable" – a term that shields a multitude of distortions.

Many adults, including teachers, fall back on the test of suitability in guiding children's reading. Often their decisions stem from the mores prevailing in the socioeconomic community of their childhood. Violence wasn't part of this code of acceptability. Nice little boys and girls don't fight, so violence should not be part of their book world.

But today television brings violence into every living room. Our government is engaged in unprecedented mass violence which is forced upon our 18-year-old males whether they like it or not.

Yet when Barbara Rinkoff's *Member of the Gang* was discussed by the book selection committee of the Arrow Book Club, one member objected: "We don't give our children violence, do we?"

Another member replied, "Why not? It's been our American way of life since the colonists began exterminating the Indians in the seventeenth century. Our history books glorify violence."

"That's different," she said. "That's history. In this book a 14-year-old boy is stabbed right in New York."

"True," came the rejoinder. "And in another four years that boy will be drafted and subjected to intensive training in stabbing, gassing, poisoning, and bombing people of another race. If he resists, he will be imprisoned." The objector remained convinced that a story of gang violence at home is not "suitable" for children.

Was that her real reason? Or was she using "suitability" to cover her objection to a book about blacks and Puerto Ricans on city streets? I am not sure, of course. But I do know that this teacher was attempting to shelve a realistic book of fiction about our pluralistic society.

The same kind of thinking results in what might be called "the happy ending complex" which afflicts many adults who choose books for children. They want every book to end with the chief characters "living happily ever after." The typical Lois Lenski protagonist invariably escapes her migrant worker's shack and settles into a little white house with ruffled curtains and climbing roses. *Roosevelt Grady* is far more realistic, of course, but even there the boy's three-part dream is realized: his father gets a job which will keep him in one place for a while, the family has a decent place to live (although it is only a converted bus), and the younger brother has a chance to have his crippled foot corrected. Lois Lenski and *Roosevelt Grady* are called "suitable" because they wind up on a hopeful note. In such books, migrant workers, black and white, are on the way up on the conventional American dream escalator, which is controlled, of course, by benign whites who deal out hope to those beneath them. This formula is deemed suitable for children, but is not real life as experienced by millions of our children. Those who see adult movies and read adult fiction know that the happy ending is a literary relic that survives chiefly in the "suitable" books for children.

Innercity teachers tell me their kids debunk the happy ending formula and prefer the unresolved problem stories that appear in *Scope Magazine.* "They're real," is the young reader's explanation.

Yet many books that deal realistically with racial conflict, innercity violence, and minority group frustration are called unsuitable by adults and are kept from young readers.

If you are listening to children, you know that their experiences and concerns are utterly different from those of a generation ago. For example, children may reject a poem about the modest violet and accept one about littered streets. A sixth grader parodied Robert Louis Stevenson's poem "The Swing," to read, "How would you like to go up in the air/ Up in the air so stinking?"

One teacher read *Happiness Is a Warm Puppy* to her seventh graders and then suggested they divide into three sections, each to write a group commentary about any topic it wished. The kids worked eagerly. Their poems were about

loneliness, pain, and war – three topics which don't appear on the adult lists of suitable themes for children.

Many reasons are given for playing down or bypassing the realistic book that deals with our pluralistic society. All of them add up to an overwhelmingly fear of controversy in the classroom. Academic students in the high school in Quakertown – my home community – were thrown into a turmoil last year when they were directed not to order *Nigger, House of Tomorrow,* and *Goodbye, Columbus,* which appeared at various times on their paperback book club selection lists. The reason? These books are "too controversial." Oddly enough no such directive was given to students in the vocational program. "So we just read their copies," reported one of the college bound students.

Two years ago I edited an anthology of poetry about the city, entitled *On City Streets* and illustrated with black and white photographs. Black faces and littered streets dominate those photos as they do the poems. But when the Bantam edition was selected by the *Weekly Reader* paperback book clubs, not one black face or littered sidewalk was shown in photos on the accompanying guide and poster for teachers. Why advertise a multiracial book with an all-white poster? The book club director has never answered that query. But when I have put the same question to teachers and a sprinkling of principals, the answer has invariably been, "So as not to offend anyone" or "To avoid trouble."

Was it an effort to make a nonconforming book appear otherwise? Was it hoped that teachers would give a greater push to a book pictured as clean, pretty, and all white? I suppose I'll never know for sure, but I suspect that the book club publisher was playing it safe and catering to the average teacher's respect for conformity – even when it means acquiescing to the vision of an all-white world. It's safer that way, you know. And if you want peace in the classroom and in the community, you better not rock the boat with controversial issues.

A number of research studies (Getzels and Jackson, Torrance, and Hudson) show that many teachers prefer teaching high IQ students to teaching highly creative students even when both are making the same scholastic scores. The high IQ people are more literal and more accepting than the highly creatives, and values of the former seem closer to those of the teacher. The highly creatives are more imaginative, more humorous, more exuberant, and more prone to violence; and these are not qualities their teachers welcome.

One of the great problems in providing an enriched program for the gifted is that teachers invariably recommend the high IQ youngsters – success-oriented and less communicative rather than the creatives who are more expressive and more original but may have a mocking attitude toward conformity. To some teachers, then, giftedness seems to be an amalgam of those attributes we used to associate with the greasy grind.

Teachers who acknowledge that they prefer to teach the convergent thinkers among children are unlikely to introduce controversial issues in their classes or

to welcome the probing questions of divergent thinkers. I think we must face the fact that such teachers are in the majority. At this stage, they are still seeking conventional answers to synthetic problems. They are stressing fact retrieval rather than critical thinking, discovery, or change.

If reading and children's books are to reach their full potential in our pluralistic society, we must conquer the prevailing prejudice and fear of controversy among adults who work with children.

As a beginning, I recommend that teachers consult frequently with children to find out what they are interested in and how they respond to certain poems, stories, and biographies. I ask my children's literature students to recruit at least two or three children as their helpers and guides – not to teach the children but to hear and, I hope, heed what the children have to say. Almost invariably these junior reading partners bring the teachers around to a new concept of suitability. Today's youngsters like stories that are intensely real and have a strong emotional pull. As one sixth grader put it, "A book has got to have a lot guts, not a lot of blah." The term *guts* put his teacher in a state of shock; but when she recovered, she acknowledged the incident strongly influenced her evaluation of children's books henceforth.

When those seventh graders selected loneliness, war, and pain as the topics they preferred to write about, their teacher had a new set of guidelines by which to select books for the group. She chose *The Jazz Man, J.T.*, and *Tomás Takes Charge* and reported those three books were quickly taken.

We find that poetry is a valuable sampler by which to learn of a child's interests and concerns. Present him with several short poems on various themes and ask him what he prefers and would recommend to others. If he knows that he can speak candidly and suffer no recrimination, he can be very helpful. One 14-year-old who had shunned poetry gave enthusiastic endorsement to a group of poems about the city. "The trouble with poetry at school," she said, "is that it's all covered over with the beautiful. This is real." I think this youngster gave her teacher a new concept of what is suitable.

Most of the teachers I meet have a very limited acquaintance with children's books. Many did not have a course in children's literature in college. Those who did seem to have had a historic survey that focused on such stars as Hans Christian Andersen, Lewis Carroll, Wanda Gag, Kenneth Grahame, Carolyn Haywood, Marguerite Henry, Marcia Brown, Robert McCloskey, and Beverly Cleary. They have never come to grips with the realism of *South Town* or the comparatively mild conflict in *Mary Jane* and *The Empty Schoolhouse*. If they have met such books, they have managed to keep an academic distance, which precludes involvement or commitment.

In one of my poetry workshops, there were many teachers who had never heard of Langston Hughes – or any other black poet, for that matter. For one sensitive young man, the poem "Mother to Son" hit like a knife stab. I heard him read it to at least three groups of teachers in the next few days. June

Jordan's *Who Look at Me* had a similar effect on another student who admitted that she had never met a poem that faced up to the issue of blackness. "I don't know where I've been," she said.

Such books as *The Outsider, Durango Street, Soul Brothers and Sister Lou,* and *Lions in the Way* are a new experience to most of the teachers I meet. They don't seem to plunge into books of this kind unless they have gotten their feet wet on some of the shorter stories such as *Stevie* or *The Jazz Man,* which can easily be read aloud in a single class session. Even after hearing the story and seeing the dramatic illustrations in these books, some teachers remain detached, as though resisting involvement of any kind.

The detachment breaks down more readily when classmates present the book and lead discussions. The younger teachers – those out of college only a year or two – do a great job of probing relationships in a children's book, raising questions that bring the story into the context of today's social and economic issues, and pointing out universal needs and anxieties which emerge in a story of black children.

"What about the grammatical errors in *Stevie*?" someone always asks. By now I know I can count on younger members of the class to handle uptight questions without flinching. "What's important – a double negative or a child's compassion?" will come the reply from a miniskirted young teacher with hanging hair.

"Do we want kids reading about a father who won't work?"

"But jobs are hard to get, especially for the guy who's black."

And so it goes, with some teachers clinging to the right or wrong of grammatical usage and the conviction that anyone can get ahead if he works hard enough.

With the teachers I meet, *Sounder* is the book that has the most shattering effect. They cringe before the physical suffering and are inclined to say it's too cruel to present to children. Too bad the father had to steal, but the man who steals must expect punishment, they imply. At the beginning of a discussion of *Sounder,* I have not had anyone question the system that entraps some people in hideous poverty and makes them the chattels of others. That's the way things are, they seem to be thinking, but let's hide it from children as long as we can.

And there the story would drop, I suspect, if no questions were raised, the kinds of questions that open discussion rather than close it.

How did you feel when Sounder was shot? How do you think the boy felt? Why do the tragedies in this family seem more extreme than we usually meet in a storybook? Why is it difficult for these people to overcome the problems they encounter? Why do you suppose the author gave no names to the people in the story? How does this namelessness make you feel about them? Answers demand a spontaneous network of conjecture and personal reaction, rather than the common game of fact retrieval.

When this approach is used in the study of children's literature, teachers find it difficult to remain detached or indifferent. Their basic compassion breaks

through as they learn to shake off their conventional restraints and risk personal commitments. We find this new involvement happens more easily in small groups of five or six who meet informally to compare books and try to express their own deep feelings.

Members of a small group find themselves committed to helping one another, and in that atmosphere they feel free to tackle books and ideas they have shied away from previously. Often a kind of team spirit evolves, which enables the small group to move ahead more boldly than individual members could move.

In my summer poetry workshop, four teachers joined forces to explore the new black poetry that might be appealing to children and young people. As they experimented with oral reading, dramatization, and various approaches to discussion of these poems, they seemed to develop an understanding and concern seldom found in larger, more formal groups. Their reading ranged from James Weldon Johnson to 17-year-old Clorox in *The Me Nobody Knows,* with a liberal sampling of the poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks, Clarence Major, Nikki Giovanni, June Jordan, and LeRoi Jones. In a two-hour session, this same foursome put on a deeply moving presentation of black poetry through which they managed to involve the entire class. It was an experience – an emotional experience – that I shall never forget.

If that can happen in a summer session of inservice teachers, I think it can happen to children. The teacher who has become personally involved and who has learned how to get others involved is prepared to do the same for children. If she has met *Roosevelt Grady* and *My Brother Stevie* and *Sounder* and learned to talk about such books in terms of personal relationships in our modern society, I think she is ready to help children explore their own feelings in the same way. When this kind of creative thinking takes place, I believe we will begin to shed our old fears and prejudices and learn to rejoice in our pluralistic society.

What Are We Still Afraid Of?

Peter Dublin

Nancy Larrick maintains that we, as teachers, are still afraid to deal with controversy in our classroom. She has made the point in specific reference to our inability to come to grips with prejudice and racism. Unfortunate as it may be, I find it difficult to disagree; most teachers are still afraid. But how are we to conquer this "two-headed monster of fear and prejudice"? I would suggest that we ask ourselves two questions: 1) Why are we still afraid? and 2) What are we still afraid of? Perhaps the ways in which we respond to these questions will help us conquer this monster.

Prejudice. One of the two heads. To ask why we are still afraid is to ask why we are prejudiced. Prejudice involves a prejudgment and is usually based on a lack of sufficient understanding and knowledge. In the case of our own racial prejudice, it is usually based on the lack of contact with those people we are prejudging. This is why black literature written by black people is needed. It is not that white people cannot write about black people. It is that only black people can tell us about themselves. And Puerto Ricans. And Chicanos.

How are we to conquer prejudice? We cannot conquer prejudice by trying to rid ourselves of it. We live in a racist society, and we are all – blacks and whites alike – touched in some way by that racism and its ensuing prejudice. We must each of us look into ourselves to see how this sickness manifests itself in our own behavior. The object is not to rid ourselves of prejudice but to recognize it in ourselves and account for it in our behavior.

When we examine ourselves we will find that our society is not truly a pluralistic one. Instead, we are afraid of the plural; we are afraid of more than

one: more than one right answer, more than one way of doing something, more than one way of viewing the world. If we look at the school as a model of society, we can see this fear manifested in a variety of ways. There is only one goal of the school: to adjust the students to an already existing society and its values. There is only one methodology: an adult (the teacher), assuming there is only one way to view the world, imposes (teaches) that view upon children (students). There is only one standard of behavior honored within the school: second class citizens (students) are unquestioningly subservient to people of higher status (teachers).

If this sounds overdramatic and exaggerated, think for a moment of the metaphors that students so often use to describe their schools: insane asylums, the army, prisons. Where else but in schools can we afford to have clients with such a view of the services provided them?

Part of the problem we as teachers have is perception. People talk about the "goals" and the curriculum of a school. But there are always two sets of goals and two different curricula: the explicit and the hidden. In order to understand the schools and, hence, our fears we must look at what the school does, not what it says it does.

If I had to pick one function that is common to all schools, I would have to say that above all, schools serve as a social screening device. Their purpose is to separate people according to those who can function within the society as it exists and those who cannot. Yet it is not how well one does in school that really determines how well one can function in adult society. It is not the explicit curriculum that prepares a child to live in society as it is but the hidden one. If this condition were not true, why would bus drivers need high school diplomas? The diploma signifies an adequate attendance over 12 years, and an adequate attendance signifies an adequate socialization to the current societal values. People who stay in school the longest get the best jobs because these people have had the longest indoctrination. They are expected to be most accepting of the dominant societal values and thus reap the benefits accordingly.

There are many ways in which this fear of pluralism is manifested. Perhaps the best example is the response of our society to drugs. There are some drugs that are physically harmful, and we have every right to be cautious. But most of the drug use in this country does not involve the physically addictive drugs, and there is no proof that the one inevitably leads to the other. In fact, there is much reason to doubt that fear. Most of the drug use in this country is legal; tranquilizers and pep pills are just downs and ups by other names.

Why is one form of drug use legitimate while grass is feared? It certainly cannot be the physical nature of the drugs, for more adults are hooked on cigarettes, alcohol, and tranquilizers than there are kids hooked on grass (let alone heroin). I would maintain that our attitudes toward these drugs is a manifestation of our fear of pluralism. More than anything else, the drug culture represents an alternative lifestyle to that of most Americans. If we were truly a

pluralistic society, we would have nothing to fear from such a peaceful alternative. But our response is to see all alternative lifestyles as competing lifestyles. The drug culture, the rock culture, communal living . . . the list is getting longer each year. What are we afraid of if it is not diversity? And who is afraid of diversity save the insecure?

We must look into ourselves and see our own fear. We can only understand our reluctance to deal with controversy in light of our fear of pluralism. We must understand that controversy is indeed a threat, not to our lifestyles as such but to the *monopoly* of those lifestyles.

What does all of this analysis mean for us as people who work with children? We must do more than merely welcome controversy. We must foster a new attitude toward knowledge and language. As long as knowledge and language remain unquestioned and static, we can never deal adequately with other kinds of controversy.

What kind of knowledge do we as teachers concern ourselves with? In general, the criterion we use is that of suitability. Is given material (knowledge) suitable for our students? But suitability implies that someone has made a value judgment – that we, as adults, can determine what is best for our students. As soon as we censor knowledge in this fashion, we are manifesting our own fears of pluralism.

I would suggest a different criterion for knowledge, that of accessibility. Our task, then, is not to find suitable material for children but to make every variety of knowledge accessible to children, trusting in their abilities to determine for themselves what is suitable. With such a criterion, there would be no such thing as controversy, for everything would be controversial. When there is no right way, there is no wrong way either. We would be concerned with establishing environments that embody knowledge. We would encourage the interaction of our children's biographies with these various environments. Suitability would become a personal matter between a child and the material that child encounters.

I would suggest that we use language in the same manner as we generally use knowledge. Our use of language does more to stifle creativity and individuality than it does to enhance either. We require children to think rationally when it is questionable how much we as adults do on the basis of rationality. We impose an analytic sequence on children's thinking when it is not clear that such a sequence is either natural or productive. We use words in such a way that they often tend to muddy our thinking, rather than clarify it.

I would suggest two possibilities. First, it might help us think more clearly if we tentatively discard certain words from our vocabulary. I would include words like school, teaching, learning, and even reading. If we cease using such words, we will have to find new ways of expressing what it is we are doing. As we try to clarify our actions verbally, we may find that we gain new insights into both what we *are* doing and what we could be doing.

Second, we must try to develop new uses of language, particularly non-rational language. We must try to find ways of letting the words we use help us see new possibilities, instead of simply reinforcing existing realities. There is a group in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for example, that is attempting just this. They are called Synectics, and they are concerned with getting children to use metaphors in their own educative process. The metaphors help them see familiar things in strange, new ways. In so doing, the children open up alternatives they could never have conceived otherwise.

What does all this have to do with us as teachers of reading? First, we must look at reading as an essential ingredient in the social screening function of the school. Most people do not need to be able to read above the fifth or sixth grade levels to exist economically within our culture. The emphasis on reading and verbal ability in general, then, is not a functional one. Why do we emphasize reading? In order to discriminate. We can no longer say, "We don't want you because you are black or brown or Polish." So now we can say, "We don't want you because you can't read." And we can say this even if reading is not essential to doing the job.

I think it is even fair to say that there is a disproportionate emphasis on reading in particular and verbal skills in general, particularly in the early grades. It is particularly unfortunate that we tend to look on reading and other verbal skills as an indicator of general intellectual ability. Piaget has shown us that intellectual and verbal abilities do not necessarily go hand in hand and that intellectual skills can be tested in nonverbal ways.

Don't get me wrong. I am not against reading as such. I don't think that reading is inherently evil. But, perhaps we could do with just a little less?

The Minority Image in Books for Youth: Evolution and Evaluation

Alice Brooks McGuire

Many years have passed and much has happened since the long dark period when minority groups were subjected to cruel, blatant, and thoughtless stereotyping in both the text and illustrations of children's books. Now out of our changing world new ideas have evolved; minorities are asking to be heard and recognized in their capacities as worthy citizens and as people. Books for children are assuming a strategic role in breaking down the barriers of misunderstanding and in reinforcing an acceptable identity for minority children. An increasing number of books are available, especially about black children, but it seems that we still have problems in this matter of portraying the texture of our variegated society in the books being written.

THE AGE OF AWARENESS

Following World War II some authors awoke to a realization that the area of minorities should have better treatment in children's literature. More sensitive interpretations, new images, and situations showing mutual respect were needed, predicated on a belief that books enjoyed by children help to shape their values, attitudes, and understanding.

While at the University of Chicago Children's Book Center, I became acutely aware of the restive stirrings in this area. I was publishing an immature version of the now widely used *Children's Book Center Bulletin* and trying to do an honest evaluation of the current output of children's books. I was also working on a doctoral dissertation – a study of the developmental values in children's fiction

and the impact of books on the young reader. Part of my material consisted of many letters from current authors in answer to the query, "What did you wish to say to children over and beyond the writing of a good story?"

Quotations from the letters received show the philosophy that was motivating writers in the forties.

Florence Crannell Means has long been an author who champions the cause of minority groups. *Great Day in the Morning* (Houghton Mifflin, 1946) was the book on which she commented:

> First the obvious and simple one. The concept that "folks are folks," all groups lovable, likeable, admirable, to all other groups, once they know each other. Then the fundamental that people should be considered as individuals and not in the mass; . . . that all of us should stand on our own merits with neither concessions nor handicaps because of race or creed; that we must command respect rather than demand it . . . . Another value I hoped to implant was the conviction that we do our best only if we aim at the highest service and, with service to the world ahead of any self-aggrandizement.

Jesse Jackson commenting on *Call Me Charley* (Harper, 1945), a book in which he injected notes of realism and reproach, said:

> I was trying to tell a story about some boys and one of them happened to be a Negro . . . . I very much wanted boys who might read the story to understand the struggle of the colored boy to find his place in their world. This is the underlying reason for the story.

Three books from responding authors used similar approaches to develop the "people are people" theme. Georgene Faulkner's *Melindy's Medal* (Messner, 1945) was written to help youngsters in school understand and appreciate one another regardless of racial differences.

Skid, according to Florence Hayes (Houghton, 1948), ". . . tried to show how little skin color had to do with personality, innate kindness, and refinement; to show that boys are boys, no matter what their ethnic origin. They have the same basic needs – to be accepted by their fellow beings."

In *Bright April* (Doubleday, 1946) DeAngeli wanted very much to add an honest presentation of a little Negro girl to her list of stories about the peoples of America. Quoting from her letter:

> I hoped that in writing this story of a little Negro girl, living a normal life in a nice home like any other child, I could show how alike we all are essentially. I hoped they would love April and remember her as a friend and through her, they would see all people whose skin might be different from their own, as people like themselves. This friendship might serve as a sort of insurance against thoughtless acts and careless words and, perhaps, as a bulwark against cruelty and bitterness in later life.

DeAngeli's recent autobiography, *Butter at the Old Price,* devotes several pages to her struggle to find an effective approach to Negro life in writing *Bright April* and of her desire to include nothing that would be offensive to anyone in the characters she produced. She concludes, "From the time I thought of doing the book until it was finished, nearly six years had passed" (*2*).

All of these authors of the forties wrote from their inner convictions that a great wrong existed and should be righted and that possibly through the drama of a story for children they might sow seeds of understanding in childhood that would come to fruition in adulthood. Perhaps they seemed to speak too exclusively to children of the majority, and the grim realism of some of today's literature was lacking; maybe the pictures were too glossy and did not tell the true story of the bitter plight of our minorities which comes through loud and clear in some of the current books, but at least they were trying.

THE AGE OF RACISM

The late sixties and the turn of the present decade have broadened, strengthened, and complicated the body of literature concerned with human relations. By the very complexity of the issue, these books raise problems in evaluation. Stark realism is being used to "tell it as it is." Fine black writers are making a significant contribution. Although the purposes of the authors may be sincere, it is in the evaluations that the going becomes tough. We find the opinions expressed in written reviews can be in complete conflict in their interpretations and assessments. What is one man's truth may be another man's deception or distortion. The presence of racism in some books, unconscious or deliberate, is becoming a moot question in reviewing.

Two books have recently received awards for their literary merit and their messages. *Sounder* by William Armstrong (Harper, 1969) was awarded the 1970 Newbery Medal; Theodore Taylor's *The Cay* (Doubleday, 1969) received the Jane Addams Award. Reviews of these books have been generally favorable, even glowing, but they have not been entirely one-sided.

Of *Sounder* we find such contrasting statements as these:

> There is an epic quality in the deeply moving, long ago story of cruelty, loneliness, and silent suffering. The power of the writing lies in its combination of subtlety and strength. Four characters are unforgettable: the mother with her inscrutable fortitude and dignity; the crushed and beaten father; the indomitable boy; and the "human animal," Sounder. [Ethel L. Heins, *Horn Book,* 45 (December 1969)]

On the other hand Alexander (*1*) expresses this opinion:

> The white author of *Sounder* renders the father and boy impotent, much as William Styron, the character of Nat Turner. The mother's character

> pales against the strong Black women history tells us about – Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth. When you study the Black actors in *Sounder*, you wonder how Black people could have survived social genocide since 1619.

And in a review by Schwartz (*4*) in which he finds ". . . flaws in the Newbery Award Winner obscured by innate white bias," he makes this statement, "In *Sounder,* only the dog expresses reaction and bitterness. The author actually calls the dog a human animal."

June Meyer Jordon, author of *Who Look at Me* (Crowell, 1969), concludes her review of *Sounder* in the New York *Times Book Review*, October 26, 1969, 42, as follows:

> We engage a history frozen around loving people who never scream, who never cry: they search, they continue any way they can, and they wait. It seems that *Sounder* is worth reading – by young, and not so young adults.
>
> The deliberate cool of its telling follows McLuhan's rule. We are urged into participation, a moral questioning, and a moral wonder. When we stop reading, we want to hear the living voice, the distinctly human sound of this black family.

Alexander (*1*) however,

> . . . found *Sounder* offensive and demeaning to the Black people . . . What the white author . . . has done to the Black characters is to diminish their role as instruments in effecting change. More important, the author has denied Black youth the privilege of having role models with which they can identify and find fulfillment . . . .

It makes one wonder if these people could have read the same book. And it points up the problems of objective analysis we face in dealing with such books today.

Concerning *The Cay,* I feel a very personal responsibility, for I was on the committee that gave it the Jane Addams Award. Seldom have I selected a book with more conviction. Here, also, opinions are in conflict. Polly Goodwin writes in *The Children's Book World,* May 4, 1969, 36:

> Theodore Taylor dedicated this story "To Dr. King's dream, which can only come true if the very young know and understand." Written with eloquent understatement, this immensely moving novel should do much to help a reader "know and understand."

Charles Dorsey, reviewing *The Cay* in New York *Times Book Review,* June 29, 1969, 26, reflects what I believe to be its allegorical significance:

> He (Phillip) soon realizes that racial consciousness is merely a product of

> sight: to him Timothy *feels* "neither white nor black." The idea that all humanity would benefit from this special form of color blindness permeates the whole book – though it is never overtly discussed. The result is a story with high ethical purpose but no sermon.

Tate (*5*) writing of authenticity and the black experience in children's books, contradicts these evaluations:

> Taylor fully depicts Phillip's revulsion toward Timothy, describing him as "old and ugly." . . . This very real white reaction on Phillip's part remains throughout the story as truth. Thus the author fails to show Phillip's growth in human understanding. Phillip's *image* of Timothy remains unchanged, though supposedly he grieves for the man who gave his life for him. The author's point of view posits complete acceptance of Timothy's servitude and Phillip's condescension. Upon returning to his community and regaining his eyesight, Phillip spends a lot of time talking to the black people . . . this is the extent of his racial appreciation. This is typical of the books which supposedly show racial understanding.

Apparently two standards of evaluation are emerging today – on one hand, the traditional attempt to appraise a book's worth as children's literature while taking into consideration the author's success in writing a good story, the worthiness of its theme, and a hopeful surmise of what its total effect will be on the young reader; but in other cases, evaluation seems to have a narrower, more personalized focus: how the reviewer sees the portrayal of an ethnic people or the effect of the book on the minority reader. Which approach is acceptable? Or do we need both? Certainly both aspects should be evaluated, but the broader consideration of worth as literature should include the elements of the more focused viewpoint. If the portrayal of the minority is offensive, biased, or inaccurate, then the story lacks universality of purpose and appeal, and it fails as a piece of children's literature. We do need the minority reviewers, but it worries me when Alexander (*1*) summarizes her criteria for selecting and rejecting titles for a list entitled *Books for Children: Black and White: A Selected Bibliography* (NAACP, December 1970) as follows:

> In evaluating Black and biracial books for preschool through sixth grade level, a major criterion was that no book would be listed if it was considered likely to communicate to either a Black or white child a racist concept or cliche about Blacks; or failed to provide some strong characters to serve as race models. Even one such stereotype would be enough to eliminate an otherwise good book . . . . Even such an imaginative and exciting story as L.M. Boston's *Treasure of Green Knowe* (Harcourt, Brace and World, 1958) I excluded because of a derogatory description of a Black boy's hair . . . .

Such strict guidelines of selection and rejection are guilty of too narrow a viewpoint that imposes an injustice on many fine stories. When a children's book

is evaluated, the reviewer must maintain objectivity and focus on the total effect of the work. Nesbitt (*3*) discussed this point at the University of Chicago Conference on "The Critical Approach to Children's Literature" in 1966:

> Webster's reasoned opinion and Arnold's "disinterested endeavor" by inference say that the exclusively personal response, the uninformed, unsubstantiated, impulsive opinion, the preconceived idea, the biased attitude do not result in valid criticism.

Objective reviewing of books written for children about our pluralistic society should protect them from unfair appraisal that emphasizes a too white or too black viewpoint.

Is it possible to set up guidelines for evaluation that are acceptable to both schools of reviewers? Once more I should like to return to the past in considering this point. In the early fifties my late husband, Dr. Carson McGuire, used to conduct a workshop on intercultural relations. I was usually invited to talk to the group about children's books as one vehicle for promoting understanding. Recently, I found the outline that I had used for my talk. It was interesting to review the criteria I had suggested 20 years ago and to consider their pertinence today. The points I stressed were these:

I. Evaluate as children's literature: well-written, good plot, good characterization, readable.
   A. The book should be judged for its overall value or effect.
   B. Children must find the book acceptable in terms of readability.
II. Characters must not be stereotyped.
   A. Must be people in their own right and not manipulated to prove a point.
   b. Readers should be led to think of the characters as individuals rather than as *Jews, Negroes, Mexican-Americans.*
III. Situations must be natural and be a balanced sample of what might occur.
IV. Solutions of problems must be fair and possible.
V. Books must contribute to understanding and must not highlight or aggravate a problem needlessly.
VI. Illustrations must be acceptable and true both artistically and to the group represented.
VII. Remember, one side can err just as much as the other.

When I asked a class to evaluate these criteria in terms of today, they felt that the points were still generally sound although one member did feel that we need books that would *stir* and *aggravate* in order to make people think and react.

So, although the body of literature dealing with our pluralistic society is becoming richer, how to evaluate it fairly remains a puzzle. As things stand now, two bodies of literature may develop. There would be lists of books recom-

mended for most children to read and other lists edited to exclude books that are taboo to certain groups of children because of having been judged to be offensive, to perpetuate an unwelcome image, or to defer to white superiority. While this latter condition may sometimes be true, I deplore the possibility of banning books as unacceptable for certain readers, especially if they have been subjected to biased criticism. Isn't this a new form of segregation? Here is a problem that we have yet to solve and in the present state of our society, its solution must belong to the future. On the whole, I should say that the literature is better than the condition of its evaluation.

THE AGE OF UNDERSTANDING

I ask again, "What are the ways to achieve objective, fair, unbiased evaluation of books about minorities?" Well, there are a number of possibilities – and probably not all are feasible. Ultimately the books might be fed into a computer, permitting this monster to evaluate them. That would surely produce objectivity! Or we might have the reviewing done by paired reviewers in the interests or fairness. Both would be experienced reviewers but one would represent the minority involved. Teamwork and face-to-face discussion might produce evaluations acceptable to all. Perhaps we should give more attention to children's actual responses to books. After all, children are the audience the author is addressing: how well they get the message and how it affects their thinking, their attitudes, and self-images are among our major concerns. Could a group of children of varied backgrounds do a good job of evaluation? Possibly continuous workshops for reviewers (like umpire schools) might iron out the knotty problems of evaluation and develop sound criteria. Would this be one feasible solution?

In the last analysis, I think, I hope, I even pray that in the not too distant future there will be equal acceptance for all. Just as the Irish, the Polish, and other European emigrants have been assimilated into the American populace, so these other peoples, struggling for their rightful places, will be absorbed into the mainstream of our society. Then there will be no literature earmarked as dealing with *minority* groups and no difficulties in evaluation. Readers, adult and young, will not say, "This is a book about a child" or "Here is a book for children to read – not certain children but all children. Let us evaluate it and see if it is a good book."

In my favorite book, when Amos Fortune comes to make his will, he says that two things stood out in his life – church and school. He wishes to leave a sum of money to each. After designating a hundred dollars for the church, he lays the rest on the table; and Deacon Spofford, noting the amount, writes "for the school" after it:

> "And will you say what should be done with it?" he asked.
> Amos answered, "The town shall use the money in any way it sees fit to

> educate its sons and daughters." "I have heard that those in your care have not always fared well at the school," Deacon Spofford said .... "That is why I give the money to the school," Amos replied as he rose to leave .... Amos Fortune walked slowly home, thinking of the disposition of the last money he would ever earn. Humbly he prayed that as boys and girls learned more they would know what they did and so would do only what was worthy of men and women. He was happy ....
> "You can come any time now," he said, looking skyward, "for I'm ready" (6).

Amos Fortune made no discrimination among children. His philosophy is my hope and conviction for the future: That we shall have good books for children – not good for some but good and acceptable for childhood unlimited!

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Thoughts on Children's Books, Reading, and Ethnic America

Virginia Hamilton

I view fiction, the writing of novels, as an experience that should reveal emotional truths rather than arguments. Moreover, I see the principal fact of my life and all life as the mind at liberty. I see mankind as a free, creative spirit evolving a world in constant creation. The human race is yet to come, and its *becoming* makes for the chaotic world in which we struggle, a world of change and attempts to change.

We range wildly between being and becoming and find ourselves in conflict between the new idea and the old. A writer has to recognize and understand the new idea whether it is called The Black Revolution, Ecology, Consciousness III, or Third World. And a writer must know that the new idea may not be new at all; for instance:

> It is the race-conscious black man cooperating together in his own institutions and movements who will eventually emancipate the colored race, and the great step ahead today is for the American Negro to accomplish his economic emancipation through voluntary, determined cooperative effort.

The quote is from a *Crisis* magazine editorial on planned black economic segregation, written by W. E. B. Du Bois in January 1934.

In a conflict world such as ours, we have but two choices – one for life and one for death. In order to live, we must persuade one another through language communication that every life is equally valuable and that all life is worth living. But if we should decide that persuasion is too time-consuming and that, indeed, individual life is not worth the effort, then we might as well get on with the

business of killing one another on a grand scale – man to man and one to one the world over and have the annihilation done with.

Surely, most of us prefer life and living, and sporadically we try seriously to communicate with one another. We don't do very well, but it's obvious that those of us who have learned to use language persuasively and who have a particular linguistic style have a certain advantage over the less-verbal majority. This edge is true especially in democracies where, at once, politicians come to mind. But it has been noted many times that revolutions are led by poets, writers, and those who have great style in persuasive public speaking. And today, in black communities across this country, poets, not politicians are filling the lecture halls and the street corners.

The linguistic stylist may be a demagogue, a crook, a saint, a hero; whoever he is, he possesses the power to persuade; and no matter what he says, whether I think it is for the good or not, I know it is better that he say it than that I pummel him into silence or he pull his weapon on me and shoot me down.

In the world today we have countless millions of people and we still haven't discovered how two people communicate; although we do know that once communication between two people is no longer possible, one will attempt a series of complicated maneuvers to escape the other.

For example, one day two individuals exist quietly with each other although for one of them that life has been vaguely discomforting for quite some time. The next day the life he is living becomes totally unacceptable to that one individual, so he leaves it and goes to nothing. From nothing, he begins again, sometimes in a radically different style. He may move himself away only mentally or mentally and physically; but by whatever method he chooses, he will escape in order to renew, to become himself.

In the past my books, I wrote of characters who, among other things, were reaching for their black American history or their African heritage; or as in the Jahdu stories I wrote of discovering what power there can be in black pride. But in a new book I am moving toward an entirely different feeling. The new novel is *The Planet of Junior Brown* in which two black youths have a friendship of long standing at the time the book begins. Pretending to go to class every day, they actually are hiding out in the basement of their school. They are protected by the janitor of the school, an extraordinary fellow who has constructed a ten-planet solar system for their amusement, the tenth planet being the planet of Junior Brown.

But unknown to either of the youths, to engage in the friendship each has had to carry on an outlandish, secret life. The friendship is a hollow shell, for their secret lives have run away with the limb and mind of reality. In this instance, you have two individuals, both of whom escape because life as they lived it had become unacceptable.

Why should a friendship that had always been fine suddenly become unapproachable? Perhaps because evolution of minds at liberty does not take place

over millenia, as it will with species, but over every day and hour. Individuals grow together, or they will grow apart. But individuals always change, evolve, and grow.

I believe modern life to be extremely difficult for most people, and yet, through often miserable lives, most people make a fair effort at living with spirit. The opportunities for pride in ourselves are awfully slim in our modern world of waste and of man against man. Still, many of us are taking pride in having found ourselves less frightened, silent-suffering, or self-pitying than we were at other times. The black revolution beginning in the fifties and continuing now is more pervasive and ambitious for itself than the similar though more limited New Negro and Harlem Renaissance of the twenties. Although both reaffirmed this uniqueness of a people, the new revolution or revelation refuses to accept an entrenched American Way of Life that is exclusive of 30 millions of a race. That Way of Life has seemingly substituted a pattern of behavior and morality for mental evolution and spiritual growth. The new black revelation attempts to purge from its spirit a Calvinist conscience and substitutes self-awareness and self-criticism for entrenched patterns of behavior. It has, with justification, viewed America's lack of commitment to its own people as having the baseness of a war crime.

For a writer such as myself, the new black revelation gives rise to fictional characters who become heroic by simply surviving their own mental and spiritual evolution. When you find yourself up against the wall long enough, you begin to calculate your endurance against the wall. You begin to know how strong you are. You are beautiful, and you think in terms of going through the wall.

I'm interested in that. I'm interested in human beings who have changed emotionally, who have evolved so fundamentally and extremely that they see no difficulty in going through walls. Walls are the sides of buildings, and enough buildings make cities. As the black poet Raymond Patterson has written:

> There is the sorrow of blackmen
> Lost in cities. But who can conceive
> Of cities lost in a blackman?"

That's what I'm talking about, turning poetry around, literature around, bringing characters and action beyond what is already conceived about them.

It should become possible, then, to write in fiction what was written in poetry by Dr. Du Bois in 1899:

> I am the smoke king,
>
> I am the ripple of trading rills,

Up I'm curling from the sod,

I am black.

The smoke king and the black man with cities lost within himself survive only in terms that they themselves define. And they will prevail having evolved beyond all known means of survival.

In *The Planet of Junior Brown,* the lead character, Buddy Clark, lives by his wits on the street. Homeless, he has learned how to cope with the city, with hunger and suffering. He has learned all that the street has to teach him and has become as finely tuned a human sensation as one could imagine. He no longer needs the street; after all, what are streets but walls flattened out. Literally, he goes through it or beyond it.

He finds others like himself. They teach one another in a joyful school. They go beyond survival, beyond institutions, families, lack of families, and deprivation to that joyful sense of cooperation and communication, of learning together.

Only by going through walls, by going beyond streets can a youth like Buddy Clark escape to become one with himself and others. But this is fiction, as the smoke king and the blackman with cities lost within himself are poetry. What do they have to do with reality? I'm sure I don't know, and that may not even be the question. The only thing I am certain of is that a writer must deal in possibilities, not with what is but what might become. And I believe, so must institutions of learning and practitioners like yourselves of arts and sciences, of education, and reading. Our institutions are not equipped to solve 400-year-old grievances, but there is the distinct possibility that they may well have to become so. As practitioners, you and I must be aware of evolution. Our children can and do progress beyond us, and the progression isn't fatal. If we become finely attuned, we might even discover how it is they can go through walls. That knowledge won't kill us, either.

I deal with their growing by writing of the possibilities these forms of growth may take. I know you must deal with it by knowing that education must be a joyful sound. It must evolve as they evolve: that the books from which they learn must reflect movement and change and all of the infinite possibilities of minds at liberty.

To Humanize People or To Make The Hearts Strong

Ruth Kearney Carlson

In an enlightening article Gonzales (*9*) discusses "Symbol and Metaphor in Náhuatl Poetry." Through his words, one hears that the language of the Nahuas is highly symbolical. The verb *to teach* in Náhuatl, *ixlamachiliztli*, means "to give wisdom to the countenance of others." Also the teacher, or *teixcuitiani*, is one who "makes others take on a face" or, in other words, is one who helps his pupils to find themselves. The Náhuas people thought that a part of a teacher's duty was to "humanize people" or work to "make hearts strong with relation to things."

A child who is one of a minority group suffers from a form of triple loneliness – a feeling that his cultural heritage is being trampled upon, that his heritage is being denied, and that his particular language dialect is being frowned upon by teachers who lack an understanding of his ethnic identity. In order to teach children representing various ethnic groups, the teacher of tomorrow must be a scholar, one who studies the cultural background and ethnic literature related to each child in his classroom.

One can better understand others if he knows something about their customs, poetry, novels, and literature. A Japanese or a Thai child has a great respect for rice as the sustenance of life. In fact, the Japanese *haiku* poet symbolizes the empty rice bowl as a sign of poverty. A Mexican child frequently knows that a whole mythology rests upon activities connected with corn. Special words such as *maiz, milpa, jilote, elote, tortillas, refritos,* and others are used to make careful distinctions between corn at different developmental stages (*6*).

This significance of corn is also felt by the Hopis who have chanted their ritualistic poem about corn and badly needed rain in their "Korosta Katzina Song"

Yellow butterflies,

All day shall come the rushing rain (*4*).

If children are to be helped to become more humane, teachers need to help them to appreciate the dignity and beauty of other ethnic groups who are different. One of those ethnic groups which has been rarely mentioned at this conference is the American Indian.

In the future it is hoped that the reading of good literature will be interrelated with expressive activities in music, dance, drama, and art related to the cultural heritages of various ethnic groups.

In the late seventies and eighties many educators are going to be inundated with various multimedia kits designed to improve reading interpretative skills. Unfortunately, many of these kits will be presented in programed, repetitive, individual lessons which are almost machine like in style. Libraries of tomorrow will be multimedia centers, but it is hoped that cultural units can be created which will have filmstrips or film loops, cartridges or tapes for recorders, recordings, and reproductions of the art of an ethnic group. For example, when young readers are studying short stories, poems, novels, or plays of black Americans, it is also hoped that they may learn to appreciate art, music, and dance in order to place literature in its cultural context. More books in the future should interrelate poetry and art as Jordan (*12*) did successfully in *Who Look at Me.* This book poetically depicts how American painters have "explained" black men and women with "honesty and grace." Here are paintings such as Andrew Wyeth's "Garret Room" or "Alexander Chandler" which make

one feel the grieving fury of gray men suffering in destitution, but one may also find hope and pride in "Boy" by Symeon Shimin or "Sylvester" by Robert Henri.

More books of music need to be published, such as, *The Music of Africa, An Introduction* (*15*). This includes such chapters as "The Place of Music in Traditional African Life," "Melody in African Music," "African Musical Instruments," and "The Music of Contemporary Africa." The Warrens explain how music is used in helping to develop the black African's struggle for freedom in parts of southern Africa. Another similar book is *Musical Instruments of Africa, Their Nature, Use, and Place in the Life of a Deeply Musical People* (*7*). A record is included in the book as well as a list of recordings. A unity of music, art, and poetry is also seen in such a volume as *Lift Every Voice and Sing: Words and Music* (*11*). Other ethnic groups should publish more books which relate music to poetry and drama.

Some readers can become more involved with literature of other peoples through their art and crafts and by their own attempts to create some similar paintings or objects [see *African Crafts for You to Make* (*5*)]. This volume tells us that the women of the Ashanti tribe tucked a doll or *akua-ba* into their waistbands so their unborn children would be whole and beautiful. Numerous directions are given so children can make replicas of a bambara spoon, mankala game, basonge bell, and an object such as an *akua-ba.* A magnificently illustrated volume linking African folktales and sculpture is *African Folk Tales and Sculpture* (*13*).

Resource specialists of the future may work with teachers in the interrelationship of various arts with literature as a means of enlarging the self and improving the self-concepts of minority peoples. Art is an expression of the moods and feelings of a people, and art related to literature enlarges the scope of human understanding.

In order to empathize with persons in a novel or short story about a person different from themselves, or in an art form from another culture, readers need the skilled artistry described by Ciardi in "The Shock of Recognition" (*3*). In this moment of recognition can come a release from the loneliness of being different or from the arrogance of prejudice.

True literary art has the "great emotional experiences of humanity" in its content. Frye (*8*) tells us that literature "as a whole is not an aggregate of exhibits with red and blue ribbons attached to them, like a cat show, but the range of articulate human imagination as it extends from the heights of imaginative heaven to the depth of imaginative hell." This height and depth of imaginative experience is lacking in much modern literature which uses a "tell-it-like-it-is" approach. Such literature usually meets the criteria of relevance, but most of the style is similar to a sociological tract or a journalistic account. Sometimes the self of a person is enlarged more through imaginative fantasy than it is through realism. The intensive artist must believe in his creation enough to struggle

toward the perfection of artistic form. In the years ahead we are looking toward more imaginative literature depicting the problems of humanity in a vital, creative manner.

In an inspiring article Cameron (*2*) asks us to do away with pigeonholes in children's literature. She urges us to enjoy the imaginative art of an author who ". . . transforms every page of both fantasy and realism into something that I can identify with, which enlarges my spirit, and which leads me far deeper than the words on the pages."

As we look toward the future, we might envision another aspect of innovative literary creation and teaching that may change our approach, this time our approach to poetry. We are living in a chaotic period of change and experimentation – one in which our accustomed molds of form and style are bursting into bits and much poetry seems to be a form of madness and chaotic obscurity in which the poet's vision is communicated to only a few persons. Birney (*1*) states that it is ". . . by this very outpouring of his humanness that a poet establishes his kinship with others and brings that sense of confirmation of the unity of mankind which is one of the exhilarations for the readers of his poems." In other words, the listener hears the bizarre identity and separateness of the poet and the human cry that is his "certificate of humanity."

The modern poet is experimenting with many types of poetry. A glance at some of the newer books (*10, 14*) impresses one immediately that some forms of poetry are changing from aural-oral interpretations to visual forms. Punctuation devices are shifting. More poets are experimenting with the style of e.e. cummings who uses blanks and breathing spaces between lines and phrases. Distortions of shape and size of different typefaces give more emotional intensity to some visual forms. Birney (*1*) states that one Latin American poet, José Garcia Villa, is noted for a series of short verses called *Comma Poems*. These are written so that all words are separated by commas so "each word is of equal importance."

Some authors have always created on a typewriter. Now authors are experimenting with the creating of poems, stories, and novels through the use of the tape recorder. Some critics feel that one of the greatest novels of the future might be created through the use of electronic media. Pupils in 1984 may be experiencing a novel through the use of such aids as the tape recorder, filmstrip projector, slides, and other multisensory aids. In other words, the child of the future will probably both see and hear many of the novels and poems which he is experiencing.

This forecast again brings us back to the need for unity in the arts. Some poets and solo dancers are now collaborating in dance-reading productions in which the recited poem provides the choreography for the dancer (*1*).

Some innovative secondary school teachers are organizing modern poetry experiences in units which utilize jazz, rock, and classical music in relation to poetic interpretations. Some mature students create original poems of their own and use music and sound effects to enhance the power and intensity of their words.

It is a difficult task to help young readers interpret imaginatively the significance of the human situation, especially in a multi-ethnic society. Man is a striving creature, and life to our experienced readers should not be a hollow tube of empty dreams or a gumdrop world where lemonade floats in rivers and chocolate drops drip from trees. Man is an enduring creature, and through his courage, endurance, and trust he suffers greatly. The child must discover himself and his future, and he must discover others in an honest setting, yet one that has the enduring quality of art. Whether it be one art that reaches a given child or a combination of many, it must be there for him.

The Náhuatl scholar of long ago helps us to recognize the glowing radiance of the teacher whose responsibility is to help learners discover themselves. Each teacher must see that the minority child is no longer lonely, ashamed of his heritage, or apologetic for his language. Each ethnic group, as well as persons in the majority role in a culture, has contributions in music, art, drama, dance, and poetry to offer to all. Through involvement in the arts, pupils may have more respect for the individual dignity of other humans.

In the world of 1984 readers of literature for children and youth should become better human beings who have a "song of hope and a world where they can sing it." This is a world where the teacher of literature helps to humanize future citizens so their hearts may be strong.

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Thoughts on Children's Books, Reading, and Tomorrow

Velma V. Varner

Just before World War II when I first began working in the children's room of a public library, one of the two basic book-selection tools we used in that library to maintain what was considered a well-balanced and well-rounded collection was a book by Carleton Washburne called *The Right Book for the Right Child.* The other basic book-selection tool was Wilson's *Children's Catalog,* with at that time approximately 2,000 title entries. Books included in Wilson's catalog were selected by a board of distinguished children's librarians working in public libraries – there were no school libraries in elementary schools except in a relatively few school systems, and those were provided, staffed, and maintained by the public library which based its selection of titles on "quality." In other words, librarians chose those books of fiction and of nonfiction in all subject areas, ranging in age levels from the picture book stage to about age fourteen, on the basis of what they considered to be the "best" books available – *best* meaning those that most nearly met the accepted standards for literary quality. It was assumed that there were accepted standards that everyone recognized and that literary quality was also a specific quality about which everyone was in agreement. And obviously, since no one person working with nonfiction books covering the entire range of knowledge could be a specialist in all subject areas, much of the selection of nonfiction included must have been made primarily on the basis of experience and intuition. Imagine a time, such a short time ago, when science and technology seemed that simple!

The publication of *The Right Book for the Right Child* enlarged this basic philosophy of book selection by adding to it the relatively new, at that time, concept of vocabulary analysis. As the result of Washburne's intensive and

important research, a librarian or teacher or parent could now realize that the recognized best book he had always considered just right for an eight-year-old was instead, on the basis of its vocabulary content, really only right for a twelve-year-old. Or vice versa.

I am oversimplifying, of course, and certainly I do not wish to denigrate either Washburne's valuable contribution to the study of reading nor the work of the librarians who served on the successive boards of selection for Wilson's *Children's Catalog*. Both were and are excellent tools, and for children's librarians in that not-so-long-ago time these works were the bibles of book selection. What is interesting to me about them now, and the reason I cite them, is that they exemplify a frame of mind: our common assumption only 30 years ago that there was "a right book" and, even more important, that there was a "right child."

Standards of writing for children and our acknowledgment of the literary quality of children's books – or the lack of it – have, naturally, always closely reflected the prevailing views of standards of writing and literary quality recognized by the adult society of a particular time and place. American standards in the thirties were largely based on the English literary tradition; and since the novel really only came into its own in the nineteenth century, it was, of course, the English literary tradition of that century.

Our social standards, as reflected in the books for children, also stemmed largely from nineteenth century England; the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant ethic prevailed, and it was taken for granted by most people not only that it always would be but also that it was the only "right" one. Our values were those of a middle-class industrial society: cleanliness, godliness, diligence, and the striving for material success. We also believed in progress, that right would prevail, and that America was always right.

The books children read, whether of English origin – such as *Sara Crewe, Black Beauty, At the Back of the North Wind, Water Babies* – or of American origin – such as *Little Women*, probably the most popular and most widely read classic example – all reflected these values and this society. Books for boys naturally stressed achievement, and many still do. Books for girls naturally emphasized the family – a woman's place is in the home – modesty, and devotion to God and to man. And again, many still do. What is important here is that it was assumed that those values were the *only* ones worth having. And it was assumed by everybody, including the more recent immigrants – the Jews and Italians in New York ghettos, the Slavs working the steel mills of Pittsburgh, and the Chinese in San Francisco. Immigrant parents devoted their lives to giving their children a chance to move into this world. Black parents, if they dared dream at all, longed to "go North" to what they hoped was a better chance to move into this same world. Alex Haley, coauthor of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, once told me that phrase was his mother's constant refrain. There *was* a "right child," recognizable to everyone.

That child was, first of all, educated, to the age of 16, hopefully through high school. This limit was necessary if he was to take his place in an industrial society needing skilled workers. A high school education was also desirable for girls, but not quite so necessary. Less than 10 percent of the population was college educated. If the right child was a boy, he was ambitious, willing to work hard for success; manly, meaning well mannered but strong and brave, ready to defend home and country; clever and ingenious (an especially American trait); and clean in both body and mind. If the right child was a girl, she was diligent, willing to work hard for the success of her husband and family; womanly, meaning decorous as well as suitably attractive physically; and also clean in both body and mind. She was allowed to be a tomboy in children's books if by the end of the story she had begun to "grow up." The first "liberated woman" in books for children was Pippi Longstocking, but she did not appear until 1950.

The foregoing does not mean that all of these books were merely manufactured to one pattern or mold. Many of them are excellent books and are still read. There was also variety, for of course every representative collection included folklore, poetry, the classic myths, and histories. And at this time, too, children's books, especially picture books, were being enriched by the European artists and authors coming to America as refugees from their native lands. Boris Artzybasheff, Kate Seredy, the Petershams, the D'Aulaires, all began work in America during this period.

Dhan Gopal Mukerji was writing stories of his native India, and Charles Finger had contributed a fine collection of stories from South America in *Tales from Silver Lands*; but the mainstream of literature for American children was decidedly western European in cultural origin. The folklore of Africa, the Pacific peoples, China, Japan, and India was skimpily represented. In most libraries, the only book about Eskimos for younger readers was a sentimental travesty by Lucy Fitch Perkins, *The Eskimo Twins*. There were lots of books about Indians, but by the end of the story most of them would be dead.

The children in modern stories might be rich or poor, but almost without exception they were white, middle class, and dwellers in the country or in small towns. There were practically no stories about city children and certainly none about the inner city. We didn't know the phrase. Blacks rarely appeared at all except in stories set in the South, and then they were darkies. The society represented in most books for children was an established society cast in the small town, middle-class mold we inherited from the nineteenth century. The virtues and values of that society were established, too; everyone recognized them, and no one questioned them. There was one towering exception: Mark Twain. Both *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* were widely read by children, but they were anachronisms; and *Huckleberry Finn*, possibly the greatest book in American literature, made many people uneasy.

Then came World War II. "The nineteenth century died in World War I but it took World War II to kill it," Gertrude Stein has said. And, of course, she was

right, although most of us are only just beginning to understand what that meant and means to us today.

First of all, it meant that a technological society replaced the industrial one, a process that is still going on with effects we hardly foresaw. The turmoil in education is one of them. Of what use to a child today is an education that came into being and was developed to fit the needs of a society that is disappearing, really no longer exists? Many people – educators, parents, and the children themselves – are asking this question. What is a school for? To teach a child a skill? But many skills formerly performed by human hands and minds can be done better in our new society by technological means. Is the school there to teach docility and conformity, the value of diligence and hard work? But much of the work is meaningless now, and one of the most important of our new problems – one brand new to the world as a whole, to poor and middle-class people as well as to the very rich – is what to do with leisure. Creative use of leisure will require just the opposite of docility and conformity.

Is a school there to teach history and tradition? But our new society has very little to do with tradition. The revolution that has been taking place since World War II is truly revolutionary, as cataclysmic perhaps as the "explosion" (Aldous Huxley's word) that erupted man into what we call civilization a few thousand years ago. That explosion – whatever fantastic, unknown forces suddenly sparked man, who had been wandering the earth for millions of years as a simple food-gatherer and hunter, into a creative inventor able to build civilization as we know it – that explosion took about five thousand years. The explosion into our new world has taken only a generation. Among other things, we have annihilated time.

This strange new world in which we find ourselves is much more than merely a matter of technology, of course. We have split the atom which, put most simply, means that man has the ability to change matter, heretofore an attribute only of God. We have discovered DNA; we are beginning to understand how to create life without sexuality, what someone has called test tube procreation – again, heretofore an attribute of God. We have the power to destroy ourselves, again an attribute of God. In acquiring the abilities we formerly attributed only to God – the creation of life and also its destruction – have we annihilated God, too? Are we stuck with having faith only in ourselves? No wonder we're all in a state of jangled nerves. We are afraid of ourselves, and with good reason.

Technology has made it possible for us to put men on the moon, and technology is also rapidly destroying our environment. Technology tells us that having destroyed that environment, it will now recreate it. We shudder. Here is a description of a scene that could happen as soon as 1986 (*1*):

> Let us imagine a particular space and time circa 1986: a home in the suburbs of Phoenix. A man is sitting in the middle of a circular room, and on the curved walls around him he can see the ocean – surf breaking over the rocks and foaming up the beach; a fish hawk trembling in the

luminescent sky. Across from him sits another man, and the two of them are talking to each other. Once in a while, the boom of the bursting surf and the cry of the hawk intrude upon their conversation. Let us now say that the room is underground and has no "real" view at all; that what is experienced on the curved walls is an image on a "flat wall" television screen, prerecorded in Hawaii, and now being replayed electronically. Let us further say that the first man is "real," but that the second man is being broadcast by laser beam from a satellite and recreated, in color and full dimension (you could walk around his image and see the back of his head) by "holography," so that though he is "there" in Phoenix at the moment, he is "in reality" at the same moment sitting in his study at the University of Edinburgh. Where, in this situation, does "reality" begin and end? This will be a question that – by 1986 – we will, individually, be asked to answer. There is nothing in the situation just described that does not appear to be perfectly feasible within perhaps the next ten years; certainly within the next twenty. We have *already* entered a new world of experience.

I, too, could appreciate talking with that man sitting in his study in Edinburgh, but do I have to do it underground and at the expense of real fish hawks and the real sound of surf? Personally, I would prefer reading the Edinburgh man's book.

But Fabun's question "Where does reality begin and end?" is one we must all consider, and not only in relation to the situation noted. Is there any reality in the fact that this nation is the richest in the world if millions of our people are living in poverty, underfed and malnourished? Is there any reality to a civilization historically based on cities when the cities have been swallowed into a vast, heavily polluted, financially bankrupt urban sprawl? Doesn't that milieu create an entirely different kind of civilization? And what will it be?

What reality is there to an educational system that cannot or will not reform itself to meet the real needs of the millions of children imprisoned in that sprawl – not just the children in ghettos but *all* children and *all* young people? Surely, the student riots of 1968 and 1969 made it clear that young people seriously questioned the reality of the "education" they were getting. And what about the reality of those qualities and values in which Americans have taken so much pride: aggressiveness, achievement, accomplishment of a goal? Many young people are rejecting those values and perhaps rightly. As Lord Keynes, the noted economist has pointed out, the drive to material success often obliterates precisely those qualities that make man most human. Weren't those flower children of a few years back telling us very much the same? Wasn't it the blind drive fostered by those values that made Lt. Calley a murderer? And don't almost all of us feel guilt, too?

Where does reality begin and end? Perhaps what was real in the industrial society of the nineteenth century has no reality at all in the technological society of this century. It is difficult for us to accept change, especially when the change strikes at the roots of our most cherished ideas. And most of us are

confused, lacking the imagination and the will to step outside our familiar selves. But the young people are tossing restlessly; they are saying that there must be a better way. Young men are refusing to accept their traditional role of killer and hunter, refusing to kill and be killed in an imperialist war, refusing to devote their lives to the pursuit of one thing only: money. Young women are rebelling, too, against a society that has traditionally limited them to only one recognized role. All of us are shaken by the turmoil in ourselves and around us, and all of us are saying that there must be a better way. The blacks erupted out of the ghettos in 1967, and they are saying, "There *is* a better way, and we will find it for ourselves, and it will not be the corrupted way of the white man."

So, what has all of this to do with children's books? A great deal, I think. For that "right child" I mentioned earlier was the direct extension of that world of progress we all so devoutly believed in. We knew where we were going, or thought we did, and we knew exactly the kind of human resource we needed to get there.

Now suddenly – for twenty-five years is a very short time – we find ourselves in an entirely different world, in the midst of a technological revolution that has already nearly destroyed our environment and has begun to make meaningless our traditional concept of work; where pride has thrust us into generational ghettos to the point that parents no longer understand their children, children refuse their parents, and old people, having no longer a recognized function at all, are tucked away in nursing homes.

This polarization of people is one of the most immediate and most visible consequences of this revolutionary process. As an editor of children's books, I am very aware of it. For if there is no "right child" any more, if the values of the established society are in upheaval and the society itself is rapidly changing, who are the children to appear in those books and what are the values those books will impart?

My own answer to the first part of that question is that *all* children – white, black, brown, or red – must be honestly represented in books for children. I do not agree with those persons who say a black child cannot benefit in any way from a book written about blacks by a white, but I do agree that a white cannot possibly write meaningfully of the black experience. The search for black authors who can write of that experience for children is only just beginning to bear fruit. Such books, and good ones, are beginning to appear. I wish I could say the same for books by Mexican-Americans, Indians, Puerto Ricans, and other minority groups. They are very much needed.

We need more black authors; we also need more black publishers, and a few of these are also coming into being. Third Press, owned by a Nigerian named Joseph Okpaku who was educated in the United States, is one of them. The Viking Press is supporting him in every way possible, and I am proud that our Fall 1971 catalog of children's books announces publication of his first book for children, *Third World Voices for Children.*

My answer to the second part of that question – What are the values those books will impart? – is only this: say it to me true and say what you mean in a way that will be meaningful to children, and I will publish it. For I agree with Ralph Waldo Emerson, who lived during the Industrial Revolution: "If there is any period one would desire to be born in," he wrote, "is it not the age of Revolution; when the old and the new stand side by side and admit of being compared; when the energies of all men are searched by fear and by hope; when the historic glories of the old can be compensated by the rich possibilities of the new era? This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it."

Reference

1. Fabun, Don. *The Dynamics of Change.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1961.

What Does It Mean?

Jean Karl

It means, first of all, that we must look at the child as a person of worth, an individual of value, whose needs must be met. He is not a passive recipient but a selective judge, a person who has the right to demand and get the truth, to question the value of all that is held before him. And yet, at the same time, he is a person who must be helped to recognize value for himself in a wide variety of situations, opportunities, and means of arriving at the truth he seeks. Even the subtleties of fantasy must become a part of his larger reality.

What each child will become is in part, at least, determined by what is expected of him. Failure or success as a child and later as an adult can be the result of a society that thinks of that child either as a failure or a success, long before he has had a chance to know what he is himself. He becomes what others think he is because that is the only thing he is shown. For the black child and the Puerto Rican child the expectations of others create even greater problems than most children experience because such children are expected to live up to two curriculums: one, the learnings of their own culture and, the other, the learnings of the majority culture. When these two conflict, as they many times do, the child is bound to fail at one or the other and often, out of sheer confusion, at both. The basic need of this child, as of all children, is to be understood for what he is and to be accepted for what he is. He needs to see himself in books as he is, so that he will see that what he is is good. The time to urge for conformity – to pour all children into the melting pot and hope they all come out middle-class Americans – is past. We must expect each child to be a success as the kind of person he is.

What kinds of books do we give the child who lives in today's multi-ethnic

society? We give him books in which he can see himself and know his own value, and we give him books that help him to understand that others are different and that differences are good.

Books about black children, Indian children, and children of Spanish backgrounds are relatively new. Before 1940 there were very few that were not based on the most superficial of stereotypes. Even now there are books with built-in hurts for children who come to them unknowing, even when the books are not overtly racist. The best books are the books that show society as it is. The welfare child, the child of militant parents, the child of the streets, the middle-class child, the wealthy child – all need to be in books, representing all the cultures and subcultures of society. There must be nonfiction that speaks to any and every interest a child may have. We need histories of the Spanish speaking in America, of the Negro in America; we must have books in Spanish and in other languages as well – African dialects, Asian languages, whatever will make children feel at home with themselves and with others. The heroes of every culture must be available in books so each race may take pride in its own people and come to respect the virtues of others. If such books are done and they are good, they will be bought. If they are bad, they should be ignored.

Such books, good books, for the child of a minority culture are most likely to come out of that culture. The black writer, the Puerto Rican writer, and the Indian writer know what it is like to be a member of his race in ways that no outsider can ever approximate. At the same time the outsider may see aspects of life in a minority culture that a person deeply involved in that life does not see and may be able to write an honest and revealing book that has value. No culture is a monolith. There are many lifestyles in one overall way of life, one racial entity. Each writer, therefore, whether he writes from inside or outside, can write only of what he knows, what he feels, what he sees. Each author speaks for himself and himself alone. But if his vision is true and his knowledge of what he writes is sure, his book can be of value. And as each reader reads for himself, re-creating a book through the focus of his own experience, he must and will choose for himself which books are the truest for him.

We are moving toward better books for all children in our society, but we have not yet reached our goal. Many writers and publishers still seek to avoid controversy; many still have old-fashioned ideas of what books are "suitable" for children. Loneliness, war, pain, racism, drugs – all evils of our times are beginning to appear in children's books but are not always accepted as belonging there. Yet children know these things exist. They are not blind and deaf. And books that do not balance the many good things in life with the bad that is there do not ring true. Adults are afraid of the truth, but children are not. We need not fear another lifestyle. We need not even fear the child who does not read. What we need fear most is dishonesty with ourselves that permits dishonesty to seep down to children. Adults need to be taught what children want to read, and

adults also need to keep abreast of what is available so that books children can accept will reach them.

The future can bring great things. It can bring a great literature. It can bring an amalgam of literature, music, drama, and dance. It can bring reviewing tools as good as some of the literature we now have and maybe, if we work at it, eventually as good as the literature we hope to have. We cannot see all that time will bring. We are in a time of rapid revolution when honesty is the only reality we have from day to day, and even that is a changing reality. If we survive our own mental and spiritual evolution, if we move through the wall of the future day by day with courage and hope, and some luck, into a better world, then the person most alive in that world will be a child. What that world is, he will determine. But what he is, we and the books we have given him will have helped to shape. We begin with the child, and we end with the child – be he black, white, yellow, red, brown, or whatever else. It is his needs as a person that call us, his hopes that we must help fulfill, his future we must insure by seeing him as the important individual he is.

Bibliography

Rosemary Weber

Finding bibliographies appropriate to the subject of "Reading, Children's Books, and Our Pluralistic Society" was relatively easy, but the task of choosing a limited number from the many listed was more difficult. Many organizations have compiled bibliographies to help their members or to guide the general public; school systems have prepared lists for use by teachers, librarians, and students; large and small public and college libraries have developed reading lists for their users. Individuals with special talents, interests, and expertise have developed bibliographies to share with classes, colleagues, and communities.

Each bibliography listed was examined to ascertain, if possible, the authority and outlook of the compiler, the criteria used for the selection of items to be listed, and the level of reader for whom the materials were assembled. These points are discussed in the annotation following each listing. Also, notation is made as to the types of media included in the bibliography.

No bibliography published before 1967 is listed, in an effort to ensure recency. Bibliographies first published some time ago are included when a new edition has appeared in 1967 or later.

The bibliographies list not only books for children but also materials for adolescents and adults. Periodical articles on the subject were included only when a bibliography was part of the article. This practice ruled out many interesting and important statements on children's books. The reader may wish to use the *Education Index* or *Library Literature* to locate articles of interest.

No bibliography can ever be completely current. In order to keep up with the new production of materials in this area, the following reviewing media may be helpful: *Publishers' Weekly, Library Journal, The Horn Book, Booklist, Choice,*

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, Elementary English, The English Journal, Saturday Review, and *The New York Times Book Review.* Of special interest is the quarterly *Interracial Books for Children* which comments on books and illustrations.

The omission of any bibliography devoted solely to materials about Spanish-American children demonstrates an unforeseen lack. Bibliographies which touch on several minority groups, however, generally include such a listing. Large public libraries and school systems may also have developed such bibliographies. Two lists of books about Spanish-Americans appeared in the January 1972 issue of the *Instructor* magazine. (We are sorry that we were unable to evaluate these lists before this publication went to press.)

BIBLIOGRAPHIES OF BIBLIOGRAPHIES

"Books in the Field: Black Bibliography," by Donald C. Dickinson. *Wilson Library Bulletin,* 44 (October 1969), 184-187.

Dickinson discusses various bibliographies in his article. Bibliographic data are listed in the footnotes. Among the 33 bibliographies listed are several for juvenile literature. No formal criteria for inclusion are given.

"Multi-Ethnic Media: Selected Bibliographies," compiled by the American Association of School Librarians, Committee on the Treatment of Minorities in Library Books and Other Instructional Materials. *School Libraries,* 19 (Winter 1970), 49-57; "Supplement I," *School Libraries,* 19 (Summer 1970), 44-47; "Supplement II," *School Libraries,* 20 (Summer 1971), 42-48.

Selected list of bibliographies divided into three parts: bibliographic essays, bibliographies, sources of information. In January 1970, the committee set ten guidelines regarding the treatment of minorities in books and other materials. The committee states, "... inclusion of a bibliography does not indicate endorsement of each title listed therein." Many of the bibliographies cite publications that are controversial. The list, however, is sufficiently inclusive to be used as a guide in selecting materials most appropriate for a particular situation. Ninety-five bibliographies are listed and annotated.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES LISTING MATERIALS ABOUT BLACKS

A Bibliography of Negro History and Culture for Young Readers, compiled and edited by Miles M. Jackson, Jr. Published for Atlanta University by the University of Pittsburgh Press, 1968, 134 pp.

Objectives of the list: 1) provide teachers and librarians with a buying list

which will help them in developing well-rounded book collections; 2) provide opportunities for pupils to observe the interrelationships of people within our own nation; 3) provide realistic and practical applications for pupils to evaluate the contributions of Negroes in relationship to other Americans; 4) provide sound background as well as current materials, and, therefore, ensure better understanding and learning experiences. Includes books and audiovisual materials suitable for preschoolers through senior high school students, fiction and nonfiction. Entries are annotated and were chosen by nine librarians.

The Black Experience and the School Curriculum: Teaching Materials for Grades K-12, an annotated bibliography compiled by Katherine Baxter. 1968, 52 pp., $2. (Wellsprings Ecumenical Center, 6380 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, Penna. 19144.)

Purpose of the list: ". . . to bring attention to the inadequacies of our curricula . . . to make educators aware of the many good materials available which can supplement these curricula." Includes books and audiovisual materials, suitable for all grade levels, fiction and nonfiction. Annotated entries.

The Black Experience in Children's Books, by Augusta Baker. 1971, 109 pp., 50¢. (Office of Children's Services, New York Public Library, 8 East 40 Street, New York, New York 10016.)

Introduction states ". . . includes books suitable for children through 12 years of age . . . . This children's list is made up of books that give children an unbiased, well-rounded picture of black life in some parts of the world . . . . Standards of language, illustration, and theme have been applied and choices made accordingly." Approximately 250 titles, annotated, organized by subject.

"Blowing in the Wind: Books on Black History and Life in America," by Effie Lee Morris. *Library Journal,* 94 (March 1969), 1298-1300.

List compiled for ages 3-13. Fiction and nonfiction, approximately 150 titles, unannotated.

"Fifty Books for School Libraries on the Blacks," by Rita Condon. *Wilson Library Bulletin,* 43 (March 1969), 657-664.

An annotated list of reference works, biographies, and other nonfiction for high school students. Basic selection criteria used, but the user's greatest problem ". . . will lie in judging the authority and the type of treatment . . . ."

Negro History and Literature, a selected annotated bibliography. Introduction by St. Clair Drake. 1968, 30 pp., 35¢. (American Jewish Committee, 165 East 56 Street, New York, New York 10022.)

"This selection . . . is comprehensive and well-balanced . . . both Black authors and White . . . . Careful consideration has been given, however, to the inclusion of accounts of personal experiences . . . of Negroes, without which there can be no depth of understanding." Includes resource materials for adults, and for ages 5-15, fiction and nonfiction, briefly annotated.

Negro Literature for High School Students, by Barbara Dodds. 1968, 157 pp., $2. (National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.)

Author states, "The qualities I looked for included 1) significant theme or problem; 2) characters that are well rounded, with interesting personalities, not stereotypes; 3) plot that solves the basic problem in a realistic manner; 4) setting that is portrayed accurately; 5) style that reflects sensitivity to language and imagination." Includes novels, short stories, poetry, and biography. Gives an historical survey of Negro authors. For junior novels, estimates reading level and assesses literary merit. Also suggests classroom uses of Negro literature. Annotated.

"Portrayal of the Black in Children's Literature," by Jessie M. Birtha. PLA *Bulletin,* 24 (July 1969), 187-197.

Author gives her viewpoints. She adds to the usual selection criteria approach, style, characterization, language, illustration, and bias. An unannotated list of 47 books, from picture books through those for older children, follows.

A Touch of Soul. Second edition. Published by the North Manhattan Project, 1970, 12 pp., free. (Countee Cullen Regional Branch, New York Public Library, 104 West 136 Street, New York, New York 10030.)

"A selected list of books by and about Africans and Afro-Americans for children from the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection." Graded, annotated, fiction and nonfiction.

We Build Together: A Reader's Guide to Negro Life and Literature for Elementary and High School Use, Charlemae Rollins. Third revised edition, 1967, 71 pp., $1.50. (National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.)

Foreword states: "Books recommended bear the test of criteria common to all good books dealing with human problems: authenticity, choices of action in solving problems, reality." Lengthy introduction discusses stereotypes, use of language, and illustrations and says, "The current books published about Negroes in America are, for the most part, acceptable. The annotations help to point up the weaknesses and strengths in the books included in this bibliography and will be descriptive enough to give readers an opportunity to

judge each book on an individual basis." Lists approximately 250 books for preschool through ninth graders, fiction and nonfiction.

"What's Black and White and Read All Over?" by Dorothy Sterling. *English Journal,* 58 (September 1969), 826-832.
Discusses English literature textbooks, novels assigned for reading, short stories, poetry, biography, folktales, plays, and essays and then gives "A List of Books for Use in a Course on Black Culture." Criteria for selection implied by article. Approximately 250 books for young readers and high school students, unannotated.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES LISTING MATERIALS ABOUT NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

"American Indians: A Bibliography," by Janet Noll Naumer. *American Libraries* (October 1970), 861-864.
Presented in the form of a bibliographic essay, this lists a number of individual titles as well as bibliographies under the general topic of book materials; pamphlets; periodicals; nonprint materials; photographs, slides and transparencies; and recordings. Includes prices and some estimates of level of reader. "... in no way meant to be comprehensive. Neither are all sources necessarily recommended."

American Indians: An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Library Resources. Library Services Institute for Minnesota Indians, University of Minnesota, 1970, 156 pp., $6.58. (Eric Document Reproduction Services, Leasco Information Products Company, 4827 Rugby Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland 20014. Order #ED 040 004.)
"Bibliography of materials about American Indians ... evaluated from an Indian frame of reference ... first and strongest concern was that all people should be able to have a sense of pride in their own cultural heritage and that they should feel they are responsible for shaping their own destinies. In the guidelines, this concern for ethnic pride was expressed in those criteria that called for assessment of how materials would affect the Indian person's image of self and how it would affect the non-Indian person's image of Indian people." Approximately 300 annotated titles in the elementary and junior high school category. Also includes senior high school library books, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals, audiovisual materials, arts, and crafts.

An Annotated Bibliography of Books for Libraries Serving Children of Indian Ancestry. 1968, 13 pp., mimeo, 10¢. (Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, 277 Victoria Street, Toronto, Ontario.)
Lists 78 titles alphabetically by author in four general areas: history, includ-

ing anthropology and language; fiction; biography; and teacher reference. Entries are annotated and grade levels suggested. Includes publications from both Canada and United States. No compiler listed.

"The First Americans: A Reading Guide," compiled by Sherrill Cheda. *Ontario Library Review*, December 1970, 223-229.

Includes books in the following areas: art; biography; contemporary; easy readers; education; Eskimos; general historical; laws, treaties, and aboriginal rights; legends. Both Canadian and United States publishers are represented. The 79 annotated entries include prices, format, and occasional comments on probable readers. Alphabetical by author under individual topics. (Reprints available free from PLS, 4 New Street, Toronto 5.)

Folklore of the North American Indians, an annotated bibliography compiled by Judith C. Ullom, 1969, 126 pp., $2.25. (Superintendent of Documents, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.)

Criteria for inclusion were statement of sources and faithfulness to them, true reflection of Indian cosmology, and written style that retains the spirit and poetry of the Indian's native manner of telling. Extensive annotations, children's books listed.

A Preliminary Bibliography of Selected Children's Books about American Indians, edited by Killian Newman. 1969, 14 pp., 50¢. (Association of American Indian Affairs, 432 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016.)

This was "designed . . . to enable young people to understand and appreciate the life of American Indians as it really was and as it really is." Each of the 63 books listed was read, reviewed, and recommended by an American Indian. Ages six to adult, annotated, fiction and nonfiction.

Selected Media about the American Indian for Young Children K-3, by Suzanne S. Cone, et al. 1970, 21 pp., free. (Publications, Massachusetts Department of Education, Bureau of Curriculum Innovation, 182 Tremont Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02111.)

Introduction states: "Our purpose in compiling this bibliography is to aid the teacher and the librarian in the selection of children's materials that realistically represent the Indian . . . . Every item has been evaluated for its usefulness in refuting the stereotypes and in conveying the reality of being Indian, an appreciation of Indian culture, and the Indian side of United States history . . . ." Annotated, fiction, nonfiction, audiovisual materials. Books for adult background reading. Includes selected sources of additional materials including museums, miscellaneous publishers of miscellaneous objects, and associations.

A Selected Sample of Books By and About American Indians with Special Emphasis on the Pacific Northwest. A cooperative project, Tacoma Public Library and Tacoma Community College Library. 1970, 13 pp., free. (Tacoma Public Library, 1102 South Tacoma Avenue, Tacoma, Washington 98402.)

"This project was undertaken and pursued due to the persuasion of Earl Thompson (a young Yakima Indian). . . . His hope is that this list will help American Indians to explore their heritage. A second hope is that other libraries throughout the nation will produce similar lists for the Indians in their communities. A third hope is that other peoples will find a new appreciation of the American Indian by using this list." Approximately 225 titles, almost all adult, very brief annotations.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES LISTING MATERIALS ABOUT JEWS

"The 34th Man: How Well is Jewish Minority Culture Represented in Children's Fiction?" by Leona Daniels, *Library Journal,* 95 (February 1970), 738-743.

Author ". . . undertook a study of the extent, range of theme, and quality of works treating the Jew in children's fiction." She wanted "a modern ethnic portrait" and looked for books which "would describe family relationships, community institutions and affiliations, social awareness, humor." She also included books on the "terror of Nazism and the state of Israel . . . ." Forty-two titles are listed, annotated, and graded.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES LISTING MATERIALS ABOUT CHINESE

Books for the Chinese-American Child, compiled by Cecilia Mei-Chi Chen. 1969, 7 pp., mimeo. (Cooperative Children's Book Center, 411 West, State Capitol, Madison, Wisconsin.)

"Before coming to the United States, Miss Chen specialized in the study of English literature at Soochow University in Taiwan. During her tenure at the center, she examined many children's books in English about the Chinese. From the selections that she read, Miss Chen chose for including on this list those titles that she felt best represented her culture. Her main criteria for including a title on this list were honesty of presentation and an acceptable literary quality." Listings are alphabetical by author, annotated, with a grade level indicated, and in sections for the young child, middle group, and older boys and girls.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES LISTING MATERIALS ABOUT SEVERAL MINORITY GROUPS

About 100 Books: A Gateway to Better Intergroup Understanding, by Ann G. Wolfe. Sixth Edition, 1969, 48 pp., 50¢. (American Jewish Committee, 165 East 56 Street, New York, New York.)

Includes "books about Negro history, black aspirations, and the burdens of ghetto life; about poverty, welfare, and the urban crisis; about alienation, powerlessness, and the quest for community control." Ages 5-16, annotated, fiction and nonfiction.

American Diversity: A Bibliography of Resources on Racial and Ethnic Minorities for Pennsylvania Schools. 1969, 237 pp. (Pennsylvania Department of Education, Box 911, Harrisburg, Penna. 17126.)

Compiled to assist school personnel in locating resources for teaching about "the major contribution made by Negroes and other racial and ethnic groups in the development of the United States and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania." Preschool through teacher references, annotated, with approximate grade level, fiction, nonfiction, audiovisual materials. Includes Afro-Americans, American Indians, Jewish Americans, Mexican-Americans, Oriental Americans, Pennsylvania Germans, Puerto Ricans, other Americans, and multi-ethnic materials.

"Books for Brotherhood" for adults, young people, and children. 1970, folder, free single copy. (National Conference of Christians and Jews, 43 West 57 Street, New York, New York 10019.)

"This list includes books of general interest in the field of intergroup relations chosen from among the many published from August 1969 through July 1970. They were selected on the basis of their contributions to the search for community in a pluralistic society and for their concerns with interreligious, interracial, ethnic, economic, and political challenges to achieve a healthy public order. The list is the result of unanimous agreement by a representative committee of the best in the field for children, young people, and adults." Forty books, annotated, age level suggested, fiction and nonfiction.

Books for Friendship, edited by Mary Esther McWhirtier. 1968, 46 pp., $1.25. (American Friends Service Committee, 160 North 15 Street, Philadelphia, Penna. 19102.)

An annotated bibliography of some 300 books for ages 6-12 organized by subject. The introduction states that the selection of books was "... consistent with the purposes of the two sponsoring organizations, dedicated to the cause of brotherhood and peace as embodied in the Jewish and Christian traditions." Criteria described.

Building Bridges of Understanding, by Charlotte Matthews Keating. Tucson, Arizona: Palo Verde Publishing, 1967. 138 pp. $3.75 cloth, $2.95 paper. The author, raised in China, states: "I sought books that would be treasured, books that would be fun, books with artistic beauty, books avoiding stereotypes, books with good literary style and child appeal that parents could enjoy, too." Includes Negroes; American Indians; Spanish speaking ethnic groups (Hispanos, Mexican-Americans, and Puerto Ricans); Chinese Americans; Japanese Americans; Hawaiians; Jews; selections with multi-ethnic representation, and other minority groups. Suggested age levels, annotations, mostly fiction. All titles read by author.

Negroes in the United States: A Bibliography of Materials for Schools (with a supplement of recent materials on other American minority peoples), by Mildred L. Treworgy and Paul B. Foreman. Pennsylvania State University Libraries, School Series No. 1, 1967.

"... purpose is to help teachers and librarians to plan instructional programs." Includes fiction, nonfiction, audiovisual materials. About 600 titles, with brief annotations. Elementary school through adult.

Red, White, Black, Brown, and Yellow: Minorities in America, #3. A collection of paperbacks and audiovisual materials. 24 pp., free. (Combined Paperback Exhibit, Scarborough Park, Albany Post Road, Briarcliff Manor, New York 10510.)

Includes some 400 titles. No criteria for selection given. Mostly adult titles, but some juvenile works included. Divided into African history and culture; Afro-American history; current problems, American Indians; Spanish speaking peoples; other minorities; education – youth; religion in the modern world; literature.